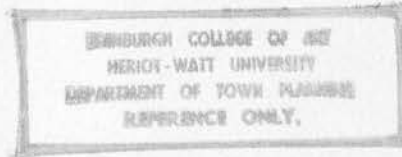


THE STRUCTURE OF DESIGN KNOWLEDGE

MOURAD KADDACHE



Ph D ARCHITECTURE
EDINBURGH COLLEGE OF ART
HERIOT-WATT UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE
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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

In the face of the perceived bareness of the theoretical reflection in current architectural thinking, this study set out to re-affirm the function of critical analysis (which, it is claimed, must by necessity be historical) as the major source of theoretical production in architecture. For criticism to be able to perform this function, one basic condition has to be fulfilled, namely that a distance be re-established between critical language and design language. Only then can critical analysis serve as a technique for the unveiling of the mechanisms of nostalgia operating in architectural discourses

For that general objective to be achieved, a two-fold task had to be performed. On the one hand, the deconstruction of the dominant discourses in architecture which would reveal the ideological substance of its explicit claims. The aim of such a deconstruction was to demonstrate that the manifest discourse in architecture is not the expression of its "natural" preoccupations, but more fundamentally, the result of a previous construction, an ideological framework which orders and regulates the production of knowledge.

On the other hand, it was necessary to formulate an

alternative method of critical analysis which would look at the theoretical production in design, not from within its ideological framework which would simply confirm its claims by accepting the forms of disputation that the latter imposes, but from the outside. In this way, the immediate contents of discourse do not constitute the finality of analysis; they simply constitute the key to the passage that leads to the general framework of thought production which, it is claimed, is the real regulator of intellectual work as it exists within specific social conditions.

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS

An opinion, widely spread among professionals and in most academic circles consists in believing that, since architecture is both art and technique, the object of architectural research is the same as the object of the "project". One could, therefore, speak only of applied research, or operational research: the first offering to define, through the project, more performing products (i.e. models), or innovating technologies; the second aiming at improving the methodological or administrative procedures in the conception of the project. Research, in this sense, would be located within the process of designing, with the task of conciliating the useful and the beautiful, the economic and the comfortable, etc...

In fact, in the procedure of design, the "research" part is that which covers any process of production leading to the elaboration of the project. In architecture, it is a practice which proposes to organise in a coherent way a given amount of data imposed upon the designer by a more or less precise programmatic, with the help of intrinsic data forming a body of more or less conscious doctrines.

It is these doctrines which constitute what can be called the "theory of architecture" and which provide the designer with the means of operating on the raw material,

of passing from the programmatic to architecture. One can understand, therefore, that before the research which deals with the definition of products and procedures, there must exist a fundamental research which is necessarily located outside the act of designing and which precedes the project.

As a way of simplification, one would say that, in the field of architecture and urban design, the object of fundamental research is "theory". By extension, one would call "fundamental", any research (epistemological, historical, sociological,...) which, taking as its object architecture, contributes to forging the theoretical apparatus on which is founded the entire body of doctrines used by architects, in the elaboration of the projects. One must also add that any critical teaching or research can only be founded on the affirmation of the principle of distinction between theoretical level and operational level as a necessary, but non-sufficient, condition. However, it must be stressed that it is neither possible nor desirable to introduce a barrier between practice and theoretical research for the simple reason that they both induce each other. It is only the form of the induction which varies. While the movement of induction from research to practice is direct at the doctrinal level (the site of which is the school), the movement in the other direction occurs in an indirect way, often taking paths

difficult to predict a-priori. This point helps to clarify the reason for the gap existing between a "theoretical" practice, expressed through "paper projects" in schools and in competitions, and an "operational" practice which, due to theoretical short-sightedness, is unable to assimilate, without a period of adaptation, the doctrinal answers to the problems it, itself, induced at the level of research.

This brings us to the second aspect of the question, namely, that of the nature of the phenomenon which has provoked the apparition of the current architectural research when it had, for so long, been completely neglected.

Let us say right away that research is always the result of a latent crisis. Political protest and ideological criticism, being hardly capable of resulting in a radical modification of the professional structures, were, instead, directed towards the academic institutions which became the site for the elaboration of a new theoretical knowledge destined to provide the foundation for an alternative practice. Therefore, research, in accordance with its vocation, was born as a result of a two-fold necessity:

a)- The necessity to oppose a radical criticism to architectural obscurantism, to the structures of the

profession, as well as to the planning policies of the governing bodies.

b)- The necessity to reconstruct a theoretical knowledge which would serve as a basis for the teaching and practice of design.

To stress vigorously the necessity and urgency of theoretical research in architecture and urban design does not, however, mean that the role of operational research must be minimised or reduced. But rejecting theoretical research means the denial that architecture can be founded on a knowledge; it means the renunciation to make of the school the privileged place where an architectural culture can be formed and diffused; it is forgetting that a healthy practice cannot develop without theoretical support; finally, it is to deprive ourselves of an authentic quality, in favour of programmatic, technical, and aesthetic innovations, as much mystifying as costly in the long term.

This investigation of knowledge in architecture leads to two related questions: on the one hand, one has to look at the nature and intended purpose of discourses in architecture; on the other hand, one must look for the most effective way as to render this nature and purpose explicit, in other words, one has to define interpretative mechanisms to be used in the analysis of architectural

discursive formations.

Architecture, as a discursive formation, owes its coherency and respectability to a system of social mythification. In other words, a given architectural discourse is but a form of representation which naturalises certain meanings and eternalises the present state of the world. Rather than a representation of reality, our ways of speaking and writing about architecture must be seen as serving a communicative-formative function: that of "giving" or "lending" to already partially specified modes of human relations, to states of affairs, situations or circumstances, a further form or structure; in other words, discourses work to specify states of affairs in such a way as to satisfy, not the demands of accuracy exerted by an extra-linguistic reality, but communicative requirements (1).

Architectural discourse, in that sense, is totally transparent to ideology. Its status as ideology derives from the fact that it reflects the manner in which the agents of an architectural culture live the relations between architecture as production, and architecture as institution (institution means, here, a system of norms and rules which is socially sanctioned). This means that, in the last instance, architectural discourse as ideology is related to the everyday experience of production

systems and of institutions, without being, thereby, reduced to a theory of subjective consciousness.

Thus, architecture as ideology has a social function: to insert the agents of an architectural culture into practical and aesthetic activities that support or subvert, in varying degrees, the hegemonical power (hegemony and power are, here, used in the sense proposed by N. Poulantzas (2): power meaning the capacity of a social group to realise its specific objective interests; hegemony indicating that the process of realisation of interests need not be reduced to pure domination by force or violence, but, rather, comprises a function of leadership and ideology by means of which social relations are founded on active consent). In that sense, architecture as ideology comprises, not only scattered elements of building knowledge and notions of design, but also a whole process of symbolisation, mythical transportation, taste, style, and fashions. Reality, therefore, gives to architecture a set of rules and productive techniques while, in turn, architecture gives back to reality an imaginary coherence which makes it appear as natural and eternal.

During this process, it is all too easy for architecture to think of itself as "depicting", "picturing", or "mirroring" an actual state of affairs, in its discourse. But if, as Joyce suggests, *"the milieus of ordinary life*

were impregnated with the authority and influence of an elite" (3), then we should be alive to the possibility that even the most "honest" renderings of reality might be suspect and, for example, impregnated with the concerns of a "theoretician-elite".

Critical analysis, therefore, as opposed to historiography (i.e. the infantile wish to find the assassin) (4), concerns itself exactly with the project of reconstituting this imaginary coherence. In studying the ways in which architecture, as ideology, naturalises and de-historicises a historically created reality, critical analysis confronts myth exactly where it is most successful; that is, precisely where "it goes without saying"; where it safeguards an establish position from doubt or attack; and where it universalises history by saying "that is the way it must be". Critical analysis examines the process of naturalisation of architectural ideology into myth: Such is its task. Its aim is to constitute the discourse of the architecture under study insofar as it is structured by relations invested in institutions and historically determinate myths. As Manfredo Tafuri expressed it:

"The systematic criticism of ideologies accompanying the history of capitalist development is, therefore, but one chapter of political action; indeed, today, the political task of ideological criticism is to do away with impotent and ineffectual myths which so often serve as illusions

and permit the survival of anachronistic hopes in design"

(5). Idea of production, making them appear resident in

It should be stressed, here, that the project of constituting the discourse of the architecture under study does not imply the activity of a subject. Instead, it designates the material existence of certain rules to which the subject is subjected once it takes part in discourse. Similar concept, could be made in relation to

Now, the analysis of both power and ideology has, for the last few years, become widely used whenever cultural phenomena were looked at. And one must be careful and pay attention to the many criticisms raised against the automatic, functionalist use of ideology as an instrumental concept to evaluate the state of society at any moment of history. These criticisms were directed principally at the users of the orthodox marxist definition of ideology, as functioning to mask the contradictions and conflicts within and between the forces and relations of production (6). But the same criticisms could be applied to more recent definitions, as that of L. Althusser, which concentrate more on the ideological aspects of the unconscious "taken-for-granted" that are inherent in all aspects of life (7). Along this line, one could mention the essays on archaeology by Leone for whom, the given ideas about nature, cause, time, person, serve to mask inequalities in the social order (8). In this

sense, ideology disguises the arbitrariness of social relations of production, making them appear resident in nature or in the past and thus, inevitable.

The first of these criticisms concerns whether ideologies are shared by all in society. In Leone's study, all members of society appear to view the garden of William Paca in the same way as to get the same sense of order out of it (9). Similar comments could be made in relations to studies like those of Faris or Kristansen (10). There is nowhere any indication, in all these studies, that the same material culture may have different meanings and different ideological effects for different social groups.

Indeed, the extent to which people are duped by the ideas of the dominant class is remarkable in those studies. For Leone, the ordering of architecture, street plans, rows of trees, all disguise the arbitrariness of the social order. But while it may be true that the ruling classes believe their own ideology, no evidence is provided that all members of society make these linkages between architectural layout and social order. In fact, as Giddens points out, *"a good case could be made to the effect that only dominant class-groups have ever been strongly committed to dominant ideologies"* (11). One must be careful as not to overestimate the degree of conviction with which all members of society, subordinate and even dominant, accept symbol systems. Alternative perspectives

may be covert, because of the controlling power of the dominant forms of discourse, but they are, nevertheless, present. If we want to avoid a conception of social groups as inactive agents, totally subordinate to the dominant class, via the ideological discourse, then, we must allow for the fact that they have some ability to penetrate ideologies and offer alternative perspectives. That co-existence of competing ideologies has recently been brought out in studies of modern material culture, aiming to identify alternative ideologies and strategies of power (12).

A second criticism concerns the tendency of orthodox marxism to oppose ideology and social reality, the "real" conditions of existence, the "real" contradictions. As we have seen, ideologies are described as masking inequalities in the social order. But "inequality", itself, is a value-laden term and can certainly be described as ideological. The marxist conception of false-consciousness implies that people cannot see the reality of their existence because that reality is hidden from them. But how can one define this reality? Can it be described as a phenomenon outside the speaking subject (13)? In fact, for different subjects, social inequalities and contradictions assume quite different meanings and refer to different "realities". Ideology cannot be taken to mean distorted communication, but, and I would agree

with Althusser on this point, is functionally necessary to all societies; it is the practical unconscious organisation of the day-to-day existence. Rather than opposing ideology to reality, one must relate it to interest, and see how symbolic systems can be mobilised to legitimate the sectional interests of various groups. Following Giddens (14), one could say that there are three ways in which ideologies function: a) the representation of sectional interests as universal; b) the denial or transmutation of contradictions; c) the naturalisation of the present, or reification.

Different sectional interests in society develop their own ideologies in relation to other ideologies and interests. Social interests and power relations can be seen from many different points of view within the same socio-historical context. Interest and power can be defined in terms other than the control over the means of production, and the dominant ideology is continually being subverted by conflicting strategies. As a matter of fact, all ideologies that appear to "mask", in the process, "reveal".

The third criticism against the unwarranted use of ideology concerns the application of a cross-cultural method which pays insufficient regard to social contexts and symbolic contexts. It is all too easy, for instance, to apply Giddens' three forms of ideology in a wide range

of circumstances. In the examples mentioned, prestige, naturalisation, masking, and so on, are applied with little attempt to see if the synchronic model is appropriate. This is why, in the recent discussions on ideology (15), it is more or less accepted that one cannot really generalise about ideological phenomena, since, interests, power, and symbolic systems are generated historically and particularly, giving little credibility to meta-historical theorisations on ideology, whose emphasis leads to the inability to account for the specific nature of ideological forms. This is the major reason why critical analysis cannot but be a historical criticism, dealing only with specific and historically well-defined situations which are very unlikely to re-occur in another place and/or at another time.

The fourth limitation of orthodox marxist conception of ideology relates to the generation and generative role of ideology. In relation to the third criticism, the inability to explain the specificity of ideological forms is associated with the inability to explain their "becoming". The problem, here, is, of course, that of language and that of the translation of ideology into a specific aesthetic or into specific spatial forms. This is the most important point, as far as architectural discourses are concerned: the communicability or non-communicability between different linguistic phenomena.

The orthodox marxist view of aesthetics is hopelessly unable to understand the basic characteristic of artistic languages as, not modes of representation (in which case, ideology could be made, through various artistic mechanisms, to appear in works of art), but as specific formal systems (16).

These limitations of the instrumental use of ideological phenomena lead to a series of conclusions. Ideology represents an aspect of symbolic systems. It refers most to that component of symbolic systems most closely involved in the negotiation of power from varying points of interest within society. Cultural meanings and symbols are used within strategies of power but they also partly form those strategies. Ideology cannot be opposed to social relations of production; it cannot be explained as functioning in relation to some social reality, because that reality, as well as the analysis of the relationship between ideology and reality, are themselves ideological. Rather, ideology is the framework within which, from a given standpoint, resources are given value, inequalities are defined, and power is legitimated.

But the most important point to realise, as far as architecture is concerned, is that there is no automatic intercommunicability between different linguistic systems and that, therefore, architectural forms cannot be thought of as the immediate representation or expression of a

given power structure in society, or a given ideological construct. This is why, in the analysis of architectural phenomena, one has always to face a two-fold question: on the one hand, there is the specifically architectural ordering, classification, and semiosis of formal elements; on the other hand, there are the mechanisms by which these ordering, classification, and semiosis are brought, by architectural discourses, to express or conform with some specific representation of the world. One can, therefore, see that there is no immediate translation of specific architectural forms into specific representations of the world. When this translation is operated, it can only be done through the mediation of discourse, that is, through the intercession that it makes between "things" and "the naming of things". It is in this mediating role between architectural forms and representations of the world that architectural discourse reveals its ideological nature.

Now, in undertaking such a project of constitution of architectural discourses, one has to follow a certain number of steps: firstly, one has to describe the rules of classification, ordering, and semiosis of the discursive formation one looks at; secondly, one has to ask: what is the internal economy of such rules and what the relative relations of subordination and hierarchy that organise such rules into a seemingly coherent aesthetic; thirdly, one has to ask: what is the instrumental significance of

such rules of design, that is, why and in what semantic context are they consciously or unconsciously selected in the first place; and conversely, why and in what semantic context are they allowed to be recognised as operative truths, that is, popular, everyday statements, enjoying a "natural" matter-of-factness.

Now, it seems to me that there is a political dimension to critical analysis: its *raison d'être* is the constitution of architecture as discourse and, in the process of such a constitution, the unmasking of the process of mythification whenever and wherever it takes place. Such an understanding of historical constitution as a project of de-mythification, however, raises two questions:

Firstly, does critical analysis expose ideological error? Of course, not, for there is no ideological error, to start with. Ideology is not a matter of truth or error. To apply to architectural history the opposition between science and ideology, between objective truth and false-consciousness, is but a futile exercise in morality.

We know - I hope - since Nietzsche, that the opposition between false-consciousness and objective truth is but one of those petrified words that we may stumble across but eventually remove (17). Architectural ideology is not an instance of error, but, rather, an instance of rhetoric. It is important to grasp here the concept of architectural

discourse as a process of mythical structuring aimed at the reproduction of relations of power. Myth is motivated by both the desire towards naturalisation (i.e. omnipotent power over normative behaviour), and towards ideality (i.e. constitution of a realm where consciousness can recognise itself as subject-constituting). Since architectural discourse is not a matter of holding the "right" or "wrong" view, but a matter of holding the "necessary" view, it is logical to assume that the aim of criticism is not to expose ideological errors. It simply describes the way by which myth assumes a naturalness, that is, both an attitude of normative behaviour and one of ideality. And this is the sole task of critical analysis: to describe the production of structures of normative behaviour and of systems of subject-constituting consciousness.

The second question concerns the issue of the historical objectivity assumed by the analyst - the issue of *prise-de-position*, of engagement. Can criticism, as a project of de-mythification, be free from error, so long as it refrains from the construction of an alternative point-of-view? This question seems to imply that de-mythification is erroneous if it is applied from a particular point-of-view, from a *prise-de-position*. This, in my opinion, touches the core of the argument. For, if critical analysis - understood as an incessant project of

de-mythification - sets out to examine the process of naturalisation within a socially constituted architectural language, it is only necessary that it assumes a certain stance within history. In other words, for it to be able to expose any process of naturalisation, it is necessary that it sees architectural discourse as a process of structuring between architecture as production, architecture as institution, and architecture as ideology.

Now, this process of structuring is not and cannot be objective or benevolent, for it is a process of reproduction of relations of power. This is why systems of architectural meanings are masking: not because they are erroneous, but because their *raison d'être* is to articulate the relations of power while presenting them, through discourse, in a natural and matter-of-fact common sense. And inversely, any attempt at exposing this process of structuring between the productive, institutional, and ideological levels of architecture, is not and cannot be benevolent. That is the only sense in which it could be said that criticism conducts an objective analysis: objective inasmuch as the critic lies outside the discourse which he analyses. This "lying outside" the discourse means that the subject lies outside the practical, instrumental dimension that this particular discourse is implicated with. He lies outside the notions, representations, images, modes of action, gestures,

attitudes, and practical norms which govern the discourse under analysis. In this sense, he stands outside this fictive reality, for, the function of this fictive reality is to naturalise historically produced relations of power, and the measure of its success is the degree to which it remains unknown as fictive form.

But the project of de-mythification does not allow the critical analyst to be objective in a transcendental sense. Objectivity, here, is not a mode of achieving absolute truth. Absolute truth, as a historical category, does not refer to the objectivity of the speaking subject (in this case, the critic), but to the objective historical determinations of ideologies; a determination which is largely independent of individual subjects and accountable only in historically concrete analysis itself (18).

Having said that, it must not be believed, however, that critical analysis is but an endless chasing of fleeting shadows. It is not a theory of historical relativism. As a project of de-mythification, critical analysis is a gnoseological tool. But this gnoseological contribution is, of course, not similar to that of empirical science. The aim, here, is not to prove, not to explain, not to verify, not to create models which would serve for prognostication and prediction. The aim of critical

analysis is, instead, to make one see the realm of the "forbidden"; to see the "deafened words" and the censures (but also to see Utopia as a process of reification); so that one might achieve - even if, alas, for only a brief moment - a state of freedom of consciousness (that is a state of neither power, nor doubt, but a state of understanding).

And yet, since the project of criticism is always conducted from a historically concrete *prise-de-position*, its findings cannot avoid being themselves "deafened words". Critical analysis is always implicated in another discourse from which it conducts its project of de-mythification. And inversely, since this project is anchored on the horizon of an assumed social naturalisation of ideology, it runs the risk of being interpreted as a general theory of value-free relativism that leads eventually to intellectual formalism.

Perhaps, it is now clear where the danger lies in the analysis of architectural practices. This analysis must always be qualified vis-a-vis, not the nature and role of its techniques of de-mythification, but, rather, vis-a-vis the double illusion it nurtures: the illusion of power and of value-freedom. for, the moment when the critical analyst has unveiled the process of naturalisation of a particular architectural discourse, he might be tempted to believe that he has discovered a truth which could serve

as a normative guide for future conduct, hence the feeling of power. Or, inversely, the awareness that the findings of critical analysis are, themselves, "deafened words" might lead to the empty view of an easy relativism.

How can one prevent critical analysis from becoming the prisoner of this double illusion, the illusion of power and its paradoxical antipode, the illusion of value freedom? Under such qualification, it seems to me that the authentic problem of critical analysis, today, is how to practice a criticism capable of "forcing reality into crisis". The theoretical problem that confronts critical analysis, in the present circumstances, is how to construct a history which, having removed the ideological obstacles concealing the power structure operating in society, can avoid the double temptation of turning, either into a therapy, or into value-free formalism. Critical analysis must, therefore, be understood as, neither an interested and politically engaged strategy of de-mythification, nor simply as a theory of rhetoric - the universal doubt of which incessantly recoils onto the critic himself.

Instead, it must be understood as a profound struggle of achieving freedom of consciousness, that is, a state of consciousness which affords a glimpse of the articulation between the subject and history, and of the relation between the subject and that which is not yet.

It is to these themes that this study is dedicated and around which its different parts are articulated, and that, even to the price of running the risk of no immediate effectuality.

One further point: the resulting text may appear complex and difficult to understand. Complexities and difficulties are present not only in its objects and its methods, but also in the way it is presented, i.e. in the mode of writing. It is important, however, to remember that clarity in language (clarity is invariably understood, in such cases, as simplicity) does not imply, in any way, clarity in thought. Such an implication would have to assume that language is simply a vehicle for thought, a mere medium of representation. Language is nothing but a formal system of relationships. It is not language which is submitted, through the text, to the logic of thought, but instead, it is thought which submits itself to the formal system of language. Therefore, the clarity and simplicity of everyday speech and writing cannot be an adequate model for this kind of study. In fact, there is ample evidence to suggest that most of the questionable arguments in design theory are due to the imprecise and often abusive use of language.

NOTES

- (1) On that aspect, see B.L. Whorf, *"Language, thought, and reality: selected writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf"*, edited by J.B. Carroll, MIT Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1956). See also J. Shotter, *"Accounting for place and space"*, published in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, Vol.3 (1985), pp447-460.
- (2) N. Poulantzas, *"State, power, and socialism"*, New Left Books (London, 1978).
- (3) P. Joyce, *"Work, society, and politics: the culture and factory in later Victorian England"*, Harvester Press (Brighton, 1980), p116.
- (4) The expression is borrowed from M. Foucault's *"Nietzsche, la genealogie et l'histoire - hommage a Jean Hyppolite"*, published in *Semiotexte* 3 (1961).
- (5) M. Tafuri, *"Architecture and utopia"*, M.I.T. Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1976), p137.
- (6) This definition was used, for example, by D.J. Meltzer in *"Ideology and material culture"*, published in *"Modern material culture: the archaeology of us"*, Edited by R. Gould & M. Schiffer, Academic Press (New York, 1981), pp113-125.
- (7) L. Althusser, *"For Marx"*, New Left Books (London,

1977).

- (8) M.P. Leone, *"Interpreting ideology in historical archaeology: the William Paca garden in Annapolis, Maryland"*, published in *"Ideology, power, and prehistory"*, Edited by D. Miller & C. Tilley, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1984), pp25-36.
- (9) Ibid, op. cit.
- (10) J. Faris, *"From form to content in the structural study of aesthetic systems"*, published in *"Structure and cognition in art"*, Edited by D. Washburn, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1984), pp90-112. K. Kristiansen, *"Ideology and material culture: an archaeological perspective"*, published in *"Marxist perspectives in archaeology"*, Edited by M. Spriggs, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1984), pp72-100.
- (11) A. Giddens, *"Central problems in social theory"*, Macmillan (London, 1979), p72.
- (12) D. Miller, *"Modernism and suburbia as material ideology"*, published in *"Ideology, power, and prehistory"*, op. cit., pp37-50.
- (13) On this point, refer to the discussion on narratives as opposed to theory, in the following chapter.

- (14) A. Giddens, *"Central problems in social theory"*, op. cit., and also by the same author, *"A contemporary critique of historical materialism"*, Macmillan (London, 1981).
- (15) D. Miller, *"Modernism and suburbia as material ideology"*, op. cit, p37.
- (16) For one of the best studies ever written on this subject, see T. Adorno, *"Asthetische theorie"*, Suhrkamp (Frankfurt a/M, 1977); see also the series of essays and correspondances by Adorno, W. Benjamin, G. Luckas, B. Brecht, and E. Bloch, published in *"Aesthetics and Politics"*, Edited by R. Taylor, Verso (London, 1980), and D. Held, *"Introduction to critical theory. Horkheimer to Habermas"*, Hutchinson (London, 1980).
- (17) refer to the quote from Nietzsche in this study, p54.
- (18) Notion which incidentally, antedates Marx, and goes back to Helvetius and even Bacon.

Introduction

Introduction

In the history of human culture, our time may well, one day, appear as having been marked by the most dramatic and difficult test, namely that of the discovery and learning of the meaning of the simplest gestures of human existence: seeing, speaking, and reading; those gestures which put men in relation to their work. And contrary to all reigning appearances, it is not to psychology - which actually thrives and develops in the absence of their concepts - that we owe these discoveries, but rather to a few men: Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche.

It is only since Freud that people started to suspect what listening, and therefore, what speaking meant; and it is to him that we owe the discovery of the speaking unconscious, hidden beneath the innocence of the spoken word, in the depth of an altogether different discourse.

On the other hand, it is a fact that it is only since Marx that people started to suspect - at least in theory - what reading, and therefore, what writing meant. For the young Marx, the Marx of the "*Manuscripts of 1844*" (1), the essence of the human historical world, of its economic, political, aesthetic, and religious productions, was immediately present in the concrete events. To know this essence amounted, for the young Marx, to reading the presence of the abstract essence in the transparency of concrete existence. In this immediate reading of the

essence in existence, one finds expressed the religious model of the Hegelian absolute subject. One can understand better the reasons for man's constant longing for an open-book reading of the world, in which events and actions are only various expressions of an overriding principle of life, of an essence. In other words, for the world or nature to be treated as if it were an open-book, it is necessary to have, from the beginning, some idea about the mode of reading itself ("la lecture" in french): this mode of reading which conceives of the written discourse as the immediate translation of the real, and of the real as the discourse of a "Logos".

In order to track down this mode of reading - that which sees in discourse the immediate translation of the world - the recourse to history is necessary, since it is only in the theory of production of history that one could understand the religious origin of reading, as well as the process by which it has come to establish itself: by discovering that the truth of history is not contained in the manifest discourse on historical events, that the text of history is different from that of a "Logos", of the spoken word.

Breaking with the religious myth of reading: this theoretical necessity has to take the precise form of a definite rupture with the Hegelian concept of the "expressive totality". And it is not surprising that, if

one sets aside this specific mode of reading, one discovers what it was really hiding: a theory of expression; and one would also discover that this expressive totality (in which each part is "*pars totalis*", or the immediate expression of the whole which contains it and which is contained in it) (2) is the totality in which are assembled, in Hegel, all the complementary religious myths of the voice that speaks in the sequence of a discourse, of the truth which inhabits this discourse, and of that ear which listens or that eye which sees the word of truth contained in each individual word.

Once the religious complicity between word and being, between the essence of things and its immediate abstraction from those very things, once the tacit pacts by which men protected themselves against the precariousness of history are broken, then, a new conception of knowledge becomes possible.

If one renounces the speculative myth of the immediate revelation of the meaning of the world in every single event, then it becomes possible for an entirely new attitude to emerge. Philosophy, a sensible representation of the world, would begin from the perception of a multiplicity of things, events, and forms that cannot possibly be contained in one concept, one sign, one figure. And one would realise that men drew lines, expressed words, constructed codes, and composed figures

in order to defeat what, at first, looked like a dark, entangled, and disturbing state of disorder (3).

This series of mythical, religious, conceptual, and artistic strategies that would be literally applied to the perceived chaos of the universe, have been devised with the sole objective of exorcising this disorder. However, it is the outcome of a linear and cumulative conception of historical development (4) that some would be inclined to believe that one strategy, i.e. the mythical one, has thoroughly lost its representational powers, and has irreversibly given way to a philosophical and scientific strategy. We have to realise, once and for all, that the passage from "*Logos*" to "*Mythos*" is anything but without return; we have to realise that these strategies on the representation of the world have been alternating in the course of the history of mankind, and that none of them has been able to completely and irreversibly eradicate the others (5).

But how does this preamble relate to the specific area of architectural knowledge? That the environmental disciplines find themselves undergoing a general and painful process of re-assessment of their values, practices, and the foundations of their discourses, needs hardly to be mentioned again. What needs to be examined, however, is the basis on which such an operation is undertaken.

It seems to me that putting in the place of what has been perceived and criticised as a global and totalitarian discourse, another discourse as much oppressive in its intentions, even if its effects do not rival those of the previous one, reveals the superficiality of the undertaking, well disguised under elaborate and sophisticated methods. For some reasons that still have to be fully explained, architectural thinking has been unable to break the circle of representation/expression within which it presents itself not as part of reality, but only as an expression of it. Inside this mode of reading/writing, architectural theory would only be concerned with how best it could express or represent nature, the universe, the "Zeitgeist", the intentions of the artist/designer, or his state of mind. Nothing is said about architecture's own condition of being, about how its knowledge is produced, or its techniques elaborated (6). For as long as this stubborn will to "represent" is allowed to persist, architecture will remain in the same state of cultural backwardness in which it has been for so long.

The history of the development of architecture is inevitably multiple: a history of the structures that form the environment, independently of the practice itself; a history of the attempts to control and direct those structures; a history of the intellectuals who have sought

to devise policies and methods for these attempts; a history of new "languages" which have striven to delimit the area of their particular contribution. The intersection of these different histories will never end up in unity. It is useless, to say the least, to try and solve the conflicts that are cropping up in the form of worrisome questions as to what role architecture should or can have. What needs to be done, instead, is to make a transition from a dispersed and highly speculative mode of analysis to a rigorous one.

In the place of the old question as to how architectural language (7) can put forward hypotheses concerning collective destinies, or how it can construe itself as an area of allegory and symbol, I would like to ask the following ones: what relationship is possible between the area of language and the extra-linguistic series (i.e. the politico-economic structures of society)? Is it within the capacity of the artistic modes of expression to put forward hypotheses concerning the destiny of society, or as marginal activities in the total process of production, are they not completely unable to offer a model for its future? And above all, what form of intellectual work is most adequate to enter into the sphere of production?

Therefore, this study has, as its source, a refusal; a refusal which takes two distinct forms:

a)- A profound scepticism towards orthodoxy, fixed frameworks, and "correct" perspectives, especially when one becomes aware of the theoretical blind alleys they often lead to.

b)- In the area of "environmental practice", and as far as the questions above are concerned, that area is diffused and confused with a set of multiplicities, practices, disciplines, and theories, all forming a compact and entangled whole which renders the unravelling and individualizing of the different components extremely difficult.

The various theories and disciplines, to which reference is constantly made by architects, would themselves need to be subjected to close scrutiny (8). There is no absolute indication that these theories possess the key for solving architectural problems. These acts of borrowings rely simply on the assumption that the source disciplines are more advanced, and therefore, potentially useful to "inferior" practices such as design. As in all direct and uncritical borrowings, the whole enterprise remained nothing more than a transfer of vocabulary.

The result is stark theoretical naivety under elaborate technical detailing, second-hand social theorizing providing many arguments for anti-social stances, and pseudo-concerns covering up established modes of

exploitative relations. All these contradictions are in turn isolated, institutionalised, and neutralised through so-called "environmental studies" (9).

The elaboration of this study necessitated a two-fold approach to architectural problems: on the one hand, it required a review of existing trends and approaches, frameworks and theories in the history and theory of design, psychology, linguistics, aesthetics, etc. On the other hand, it required a look at the existing modes of analysis of, firstly, practical issues, and secondly, theoretical and discursive formations.

In both instances, it involved a method of reading that was by no means apparent and definite from the beginning, but one which evolved and developed according to the material subjected to it. In this sense, analysis is both determining and determined: it determines the object of its own research, but it is also determined by the material it subjects to this research.

At this stage, I would like to locate this study in the conjuncture within which it evolved. By location, I mean the spectrum of past and present fields of inquiry, the range of theoretical as well as other forms of arguments, and finally, the institutional and social context of these inquiries. However, this is not to say that the conjuncture might be responsible for the possible

shortcomings of the study; it is simply saying that the questions to which this study has addressed itself can only be approached in relation to the problem of the definition of the limits of language. Such a mode of inquiry cannot be confined within the limits of one particular language (i.e. architectural language) since what is to be establish is the nature of these limits. It is in this sense that this study is related to developments in philosophy, social and aesthetic theories, and linguistics. That the theoretical conjuncture of this work is constituted by non-architectural domains of inquiry is the reason for it being from the outside (10).

What has emerged in the course of the last twenty years is the extraordinary efficacy of the discontinuous, particular, and local criticism. But together with this, one also discovers something that, perhaps, was not initially foreseen: something one might describe as the inhibiting effect of global, and totalitarian theories (11). It is not that these theories have not provided, nor continue to provide, in a fairly consistent fashion, useful tools for local research. But in each case, the attempt to think in terms of a totality has, in fact, proved to be a hindrance to research.

Therefore, the notable point to be gleaned from the experiments of the last twenty years, their predominant feature, is the local character of criticism. This local

criticism is characterised by its refusal to measure itself against any universal model. This is not to be taken to mean that its qualities are those of an obtuse, naive, or primitive empiricism; what this essentially local character of criticism indicates is an autonomous, non-centralised kind of theoretical production, one whose validity is not dependent on the approval of the established regimes of thought.

It is here that we touch upon another feature of these experiments: it seems to me that this local criticism has proceeded by means of what one might call "a return to knowledge". What is meant by this phrase is this: in the course of recent times, we have witnessed something that can be described as an "insurrection of subjugated knowledges". Subjugated knowledges refer to two things: on the one hand, they refer to the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or a formal systematization; contents which allow one to rediscover the ruptural effects of conflicts that the order imposed by functionalist or systematizing thought is designated to mask. Subjugated knowledges are, therefore, those blocks of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist theory, and which local criticism has been able to reveal. On the other hand, by subjugated knowledges, one should understand something which, in a sense, is altogether

different: namely, a whole set of knowledges which have been disqualified as inadequate to their task, or insufficiently elaborated; naive knowledges located down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity.

What has emerged of these experiments is something one might call a genealogy, in the sense that Foucault understands it (12), or rather, a multiplicity of genealogical researches, a painstaking rediscovery of hidden struggles. And these genealogies, which are the combined products of an erudite knowledge and a popular knowledge (the two categories of subjugated knowledges that are described above), were not possible and could not even have been attempted, except on one condition: that the tyranny of global discourses, with all their hierarchies and all their privileges of a theoretical avant-garde, was eliminated.

Now, this research activity has nothing to do with an opposition between the abstract unity of theory and the concrete multiplicity of facts. It has nothing to do with the disqualification of the speculative dimension which opposes to it, in the name of science, the rigour of well-established knowledges. It is not, therefore, via an empiricism that these projects unfold. What this research activity does is simply to entertain the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified,

illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, classify and order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea as to what constitutes a science and its objects. These projects are, therefore, not returns to a more careful or exact form of science. They are precisely anti-sciences. Not that they vindicate a lyrical right to ignorance, or non-knowledge. It is not that they are concerned to deny knowledge, or that they esteem the virtues of direct cognition and base their practice on immediate experience which escapes encapsulation in knowledge. The prime concern is, instead, with this "insurrection of knowledges" which are opposed not to the contents, methods, or concepts of science, but to the effects of a centralising power which is linked to the institution and functioning of an organised scientific discourse within a society such as that which exists in the West.

The target of this criticism is, in this sense, not the specific contents of any particular branch of knowledge, but the ways in which this branch is turned into an institution: a name is given to it; a group of people are given the monopoly over teaching it, talking and writing about it, as well as deciding what will and what will not be relevant (the "experts"); a place is allocated to this group, from which to exercise their monopoly (a school, an institute, a department, a chair, etc...). This is what I

mean by the institutionalisation of knowledge: the "laic" version of the monastery with its clergy, its masses, and its rituals. Anything that is said outside this institution is either branded as irrelevant or "amateurish".

What is most interesting, in this research activity, is the impertinence of the dissent contained in it. It is form that was, above all, shaken. The first victim of this upheaval was the man professing to knowledge, the teacher, or the expert, for whom his field of competence is a justification of authority, and whose language is a monologue inasmuch as it leaves only one possibility open to the listener, that of dialogue - that is, of indicating that he has understood, and even of asking the occasional question, provided it was "relevant". In such a world of dialogue, there is nothing that cannot be questioned, on the condition that the correct forms are observed. In this way, form eludes all criticism, as does the relation of authority which it sustains (13).

What is at stake, in this revolt against the forms that knowledge assumes, is the status of truth. For if what is presented as knowledge is revealed not as true in the absolute, but only as true within the confines of a specific strategy, or a specific order (be it mythical, religious, scientific, or philosophical), then, historical development is revealed not as the gradual emergence of

truth, until it reaches the status of the absolute (14), but as the expression of the constant struggle between various strategies over what is to be true and what is not; and the task of historical analysis becomes that of revealing that any specific period of history is not the expression of the state of development of society, up to that time, but instead, the expression of one battle in the constant "war of languages" over the status of truth.

This is the form that the all-out attack against dialectical synthesis took, over the last two decades. The ideals of a new "classicism", of an organic civilization, defended by Merleau-Ponty (15), were completely renounced. It is no longer believed that the task of the century was to integrate the irrational within an expanded reason. The task, now, is to deconstruct what is understood to be the principle of the dominant language in the West - the logic of identity - and to provide a critique of history, to be approached henceforth as a myth, that is, an efficient solution (but devoid of truth) to the conflict between the "Same" and the "Other" (16). This is the reason for the massive return to Nietzsche's critique which is directed at "true" science and "true" morality. In his critique, Nietzsche demonstrates science as such - the desire for truth - originates in morality, in the ascetic ideal, and that morality as such, is the result of resentment against life.

In any event, no sooner do we become aware that truth is only the expression of a will to truth, than we must face the fact that this truth betrays a timid rejection of the world inasmuch as it is not a true world; it is just a fable:

"The world has become a fable; the world as such is only a fable. A fable is something which is told, having no existence outside the tale. The world is something which is told, an event which is narrated; it is therefore an interpretation. Religion, art, science, history, are just so many interpretations of the world, or rather, so many variants of the fable" (17).

In order to get away from a historical interpretation which presents the world in the form of a single truth, a single "Logos" (in the case of Western society, the logic of identity), one has simply to show that this "Logos" is already a "Mythos". Philosophy was constructed as a measure against tales and tall stories; Plato has closed the gates of his city to poets whom he accused of spinning seductive yarns, foreign to truth. It is now necessary to show that Plato is also something of a storyteller, that philosophy, too, is a seductive tale.

Philosophers oppose the theoretical and the narrative discourses: the former asserts *"This is always and everywhere the case, in all cases and from all time"*; the

latter begins *"Once upon a time..."*. As long as such an opposition exists between the particular and the universal, theory will dominate the mind, and anecdotes and tales will be considered as harmless entertainment. But if all discourses are to be simply narratives, whoever were to claim that his discourse has the character of the absolute would invite mockery, for the properties of the narrative are as follows:

a)- It has always begun, and it is always the story of a previous story; the referent of a narrative is never the crude fact, nor the dumb event, but other narratives, other stories:

"...and in fact, we are always under the influence of some narrative; things have always been told to us already, and we, ourselves, have already been told" (18).

b)- It is never finished, for, in principle, the narrator addresses a listener who may, in his turn, become the narrator, making the narration to which he was listening into a fresh narration.

As such, narratives would be very different from scientific theorizing, but simply the production of an account of a situation as a result of contemplation; that is, not as a result of further participation within it, but as a result of reviewing the situation under the auspices of a certain, constant interest. One can,

therefore, in reformulating one's own knowledge of the past, give it a new interpretation. But there are two ways in which interpretation can be understood:

a)- One may decide beforehand as to the nature of the world in which we live and interpret events as falling into one or another familiar category within it; that is determining to keep ourselves constant and interpreting everything as fitting how we already are.

b)- The second sense of interpretation is concerned with elucidating what, in the present, is a really possible development for the future. That is, not what might happen by chance or necessity, but what, realistically, we, ourselves, might attempt to do or to be, because provision for it exists in our present situation.

It was Vico who, in 1744, first set out the possibility of this second form of existence, in his concern to look at the provenance of the development of our human capacities and abilities - where do our cultural achievements come from? Whereas others thought that their origin could be in the "blind concourse of atoms", or in a "deaf chain of causality", or again in the "natural order of things", he thought that they were mistaken:

"They ought to have studied it in the economy of civil institutions, in keeping with the full meaning of applying to providence the term "divinity" (i.e. the power of

divining), from *divinari*, or to divine, which is to understand what is hidden from men - in the future - or what is hidden in them - their consciousness" (19).

In this form of interpretation, one is not attempting to locate events in the shared imaginary world of space and time; one is attempting a practical task, to formulate this past as a practically conceived corpus of knowledge of use now! One can use it to transform both oneself and one's own forms of life:

"Well, it is not the past, but what we make of the past that shapes our future and present. But I can see that the two voyages share common elements of language and memory" (20).

The reformulation of the past (both the immediate past and the distant past) as a practical resource appropriate to the present requires that it be located, not in a theoretical space, but relative to the activities in which one is currently involved. It is the narrative account which provides one, not with a final, integrated, harmonious, and true picture of how all is and should be, but with the paradigms and motifs of a practical resource, not for predictions, but only for tentative suggestions. In other words, it cannot be applied like theoretical knowledge; it is merely an instructive account.

As such, narrative accounts, as opposed to theories,

cannot be used to "planning for the future" (i.e. the making of a model of it, or the formulation of possibilities in an imaginary place). Because of the traditional domination of theory over narrative, in the West, this "planning for the future" has constituted one of the central activities of Western forms of life. Narrative accounts, instead, allow only for a "preparation" of the future.

But the switch from theories to narratives requires a strange self-discipline, of not so much denying oneself use of one's own capacity of reflection, that is one's inclination to treat a tendency of a state of affairs to happen as something already existing, but of noticing, when one does reflect, how one does it, the method one seems to use. The task is one of "deconstruction", of discovering *the process and attainment of imagination which are continuous with, but must be distinguished from the other observable features of the settings in which they occur* (21).

Therefore, the story never ends. Or, perhaps, one story does: one narrative comes to an end, the dialectical narrative. But several versions of this account already exist, several accounts of this end; several accounts of these accounts (22). The discourse on universal history was only a powerful myth. But what power it must have had

to have hypnotised everybody for such a long time! The end of history is not the end of the account. The many accounts of this ending are preparing a future in which several variants of the fable of the world will reign again, and that, for the Nth time.

At this point, I would like to stress that there is no intention, on my part, of conducting an extensive analysis of the theoretical developments that I have just outlined. however, in the course of the study, certain key concepts, because of their immediate relevance to architectural theory (e.g. "truth", "power", "language"), will be discussed in detail whenever necessary. All that I can say, at this stage, is that a series of theoretical works had profound effects on the understanding of social phenomena, that they have opened up a certain theoretical field (more than a framework, or a methodology), and that they have contributed greatly to what is widely perceived, in the West, as a shift in sensibility in society, and a new stage in the history of mankind. It is within this atmosphere that my own thoughts developed, for the last fifteen years, and that a certain perspective began to emerge. For this reason, the debt owed by this study to this series of works is great, and yet, hardly describable. It is certainly not expressed in the form of a direct reference to, or the simple application of, one of these works to the field of architecture. It is an

interpretation of the state of architectural thinking which shares the same concern for the fundamental question of the limits of operability of language.

It is my intention to demonstrate that the various discourses on architectural theory which present themselves as the true embodiment of the purpose and essence of architecture (discourses such as that on "human needs", or that of architecture as a linguistic system of communication, or that of the expression of the "Zeitgeist") are just so many stories, so many fables with no universal or meta-historical essence; and that they rely on a certain number of assumptions whose historical origins can be precisely located.

It must be now apparent that there will be no attempt to establish yet another alternative discourse (another story) to all those already existing. What I shall be concerned with is simply the analysis of that which constitutes knowledge in architecture, and that which allows it to present itself as knowledge. If there is an alternative proposed, it is at the level of the mode of reading itself: it is in seeing that the theoretical production of discourses is not different from any other productive process, even if its effects on the social structure will not be similar; it is in the opening up of a perspective in which it is not architecture as object that matters, but the processes by which this object is

produced.

NOTES

- (1) K. Marx, *"Les manuscripts de 1844"*, Editions Maspero (Paris, 1965).
- (2) This is similar to the use of "synechdoche" in Rhetorics, that is the figure of putting the part to signify the whole.
- (3) *"Physics and metaphysics are coming together in a conception of the world in which process, becoming, is taken as a primary constituent of physical existence...The world is far from being homogeneous"* (p16),
"In the world we are familiar with, equilibrium is a rare and precarious state" (p128),
"...most of reality, instead of being orderly and equilibrial, is seething and bubbling with change, disorder, process" (pxv),
I. Priogrine & L. Stenger, *"Order out of chaos: man's new dialogue with nature"*, Bantam Books (New York, 1984).
- (4) It is the conception which addresses historical development as a gradual and continual elimination of errors from knowledge until the day when absolute knowledge is reached: that would represent the "end of history". It is Hegel, of course, who is responsible

for the propagation of this conception which will be discussed in the part related to history and design.

- (5) On the process of the remythicizing of the world in modern times, see T. Mann, *"Nobilta dello spirito"*, edited by L. Mazzucchetti, Mondadori (Milan, 1973), H. Blumemberg, *"Study on myths"*, Suhrkamp (Frankfurt a/M, 1980), and also T. Mann & F. Jesi, *"Materiali mitologici"*, Einaudi (Turin, 1979).

- (6) In the other artistic modes of expression (music, painting, literature, etc), the problem of representation was approached in an entirely new fashion: the attempt was to make the object refer not to a reading subject, but to itself and its own condition of being. In other words, the problem was that of a rigorous formulation of language. This rigorous formalization of the "linguistic game" was a common theme which could be found in the iron-discipline of Karl Kraus' writings, in the "classical" poetic syntax of Georg Trakl, in the pictorial structure of Egon Schiele, as well as in the rhythmico-serial acoustic grammar of Schoenberg and Anton Webern. An interpretation of this common theme was offered by Wittgenstein, in his *Tractatus*, when he said: *"To trace a limit to thought, or rather, to the expression of thought...the limit cannot consequently be traced, except in language, and all that is on the*

other side of the limit would simply be nonsense". K.L. Wittgenstein, "Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus", published first in English in the *International Library of Psychology, Philosophy, and Science* (London, 1922), p189.

- (7) The use of the word "language", here, is only metaphorical. It is not intended to imply in any way that its structure is similar to that of the verbal languages (refer to the chapter on language).
- (8) It is obviously far beyond the scope of this study to undertake the task of rewriting the complete history of the human sciences. But the key elements borrowed by design theorists, in the elaboration of specific approaches, will be analysed.
- (9) The various ways in which these social contradictions are neutralised are studied in relation to certain key concepts such as "human needs", "community", "imagery", etc.
- (10) To analyse a language from the outside does not mean to look at everything that is other than this particular language. It simply means to look at the real incidence that a language can have on the functioning and development of a social structure. On this methodological point, see L. Althusser & E. Balibar, "*Lire le Capital*", F/M Petite Collection Maspero

(Paris, 1973), p35.

(11) One example of these global theories would be the Marxist model of economic determinism within which, every action and every event is to be interpreted in the light of the class-struggle over the means of production. Another example is that which subsumes every human aspect of life to the workings of the unconscious. But the most important model that has dominated Western thought for more than 150 years is that of the Hegelian interpretation of historical development as the gradual unfolding of the absolute subject.

(12) M. Foucault, *"Nietzsche, la genealogie et l'histoire - hommage a Jean Hyppolite"*, published in *Semiotexte* N.3 (Paris, 1971).

(13) Incidentally, these institutional "experts", often and quite conveniently, "forget" the question of the power that they hold over deciding what is worthy of attention, and what is not. The possibility of a superior understanding to theirs, if it originates from a source located in a lower institutional group, is simply inconceivable to them. History is full of such cases, but perhaps the most striking one is that of Walter Benjamin, whose study on German tragedy, *"The birth of the German tragic drama"*, was submitted in

1924 for the award of a Doctorate at the university of Frankfurt, and which was rejected on the grounds that it was incomprehensible. The study is regarded today, by literary critics, as the most complete and most advanced analysis of Goethe's works and German tragic literature ever written, up to this day. For a critical biography of Walter Benjamin, see the introduction by Hannah Arendt to W. Benjamin, *"Illuminations"*, Fontana - Collins Editions (London, 1973).

(14) This, of course, represents the "end of history" the moment at which man achieves mastery over all that has eluded him before.

(15) See M. Merleau-Ponty, *"Phenomenology of perception"*, trans. by Colin Smith, collection Humanities (London, New York, 1962), and also by the same author, *"The structure of behaviour"*, trans. by Alden Fisher, Beacon Publications (Boston, 1963).

(16) The theme of the critique of history has been taken by various writers in different areas, and with different approaches. Therefore, the point of convergence of these various studies lies not in a similarity of response, but only in the formulation of the problem: the continual striving to find some answers to the crucial questions of "language". In this sense, the use of a term such as "post-structuralism"

is totally unacceptable if it is meant to infer anything more than a chronological sequentiality. There is no such school of thought known as "post-structuralist". On this point, refer to the quote from Nietzsche on p54 of this study.

(17) F. Nietzsche, *"The twilight of the idols"*, Penguin Books (1984), p43.

(18) J.P. Lyotard, *"Introductions paiennes"*, Galilee Editions (Paris, 1977), p47.

(19) G. Vico, *"The new science of Giambattista Vico"*, edited and translated by T.G. Bergin & H.H. Firsh, third edition, originally published in 1744, Cornell University Press (Ithaca, N.Y., 1970), p59.

(20) R. Fraser, *"In search for a past: the manor house Amnersfield, 1933-1945"*, Verso (London, 1984), quoted by J. Shotter in *"Accounting for place and space"*, published in *Environment and Planning D: Space and Society*, Vol.3 (1985), pp447-460.

(21) H. Garfinkel, *"Studies in Ethnomethodology"*, Prentice-Hall Inc. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1967).

(22) Refer to note (16).

PART ONE

The unpoetical dwelling of man

"... May, if life is sheer toil, a man lift his eyes and say: so I wish to be? Yes. As long as Kindness, the pure, still stays with his heart, man not unhappily measures himself against the Godhead. Is God unknown? Is he manifest like the sky? I'd sooner believe the latter. It is the measure of man. Full of merit, yet poetically, man dwells on this Earth. But no purer is the shade of the starry night, if I might put it so, than man, who's called an image of the Godhead. Is there a measure on the Earth? There is none." (1)

I was recently struck by the fact that it is possible to find the entire thematic of contemporary design theory expressed in the light of Heideggerian criticism. This is because he had long since given thought to precisely that which seems most worthy of analysis, in the present situation of architectural and urban practice. Moreover, he formulated it in such a way as to render impossible, or inconceivable, the values and purposes on which contemporary design theory nourishes itself.

Against the declared objective of contemporary

architecture to build "homes", i.e. places in which people would be at peace with themselves and their neighbours, Heidegger stresses the necessity to understand the ambiguity of the relationship between building and inhabiting. He therefore asks the fundamental question as to whether it is at all possible for architecture to sustain such a claim, through the techniques of its own language. At stake are not the old criteria - the political, the sociological, or the aesthetic - which, from time to time, are used in order to appropriate the name of architecture, but the name itself. Why architecture?

In the tectonic sense of the world, architecture builds insofar as it produces, insofar as it makes something appear. And this something is "dwelling". The nature of building is "letting dwell". Dwelling is not the result of building, but it is that which building produces into presence. It becomes produced, made to appear, but it is not determined by building:

"Only if we are capable of dwelling, only then can we build." (2)

In the sense that Heidegger gives to the word building, it becomes closely related to dwelling. Dwelling is the manner in which mortals are on the Earth. Building, as dwelling, unfolds into the building that cultivates growing things (*Colere*), and the building that erects

buildings (*Aedificare*).

To dwell, to be set at peace, means to remain at peace with the free sphere that safeguards each thing in its nature. The fundamental character of the tectonic aspect of building is this "sparing" and "preserving". It pervades dwelling in its whole range. That range reveals itself to us as soon as we reflect that human being consists in dwelling, and indeed, dwelling in the sense of the stay of the mortals on the Earth. By dwelling, mortals are in the "Geviert", in the "Fourfold" - that is, on the Earth and beneath the Heavens, before the Gods and in the community of Men. In the tectonic sense of the word, architecture makes the "Fourfold" happen; it makes it appear and preserves it.

There has always been a tendency to read this part of Heidegger's criticism as a kind of philosophy of architecture in the manner of Spengler's work in which he spoke of the absence of the "house" in the World-city; the absence of houses where "*Vesta and Janus, Lares and Penates*" might be able to reside (3). The house appears uprooted, and man lives there only as a guest or a tenant. The spirit is stranger to this space whose landscape is systematically destroyed by mere *aedificare*, mere *ars aedificandi*. The spirit, no longer a plant, no longer connected to Heaven and Earth, becomes sterile and leads an errant existence amidst the artificial nature of the

metropolis.

But this late romantic criticism of the dreaded "soullessness" brought about by the mechanization of the world (4) is not part of the intention implicit in Heidegger's argument. In his mind, the uprooted spirit of the metropolis is not sterile, but productive *par excellence*. It is the definite rupture of the subject's natural being which permits it the will to power over nature. But there is an even more substantial difference with Spengler's criticism: the problem, for Heidegger, is not with the form of the building itself. What is missing, is not the fitness of building to spirit, in which case the spirit would be foreign to his home; the problem lies in the fact that architecture, today, can no longer claim to build "homes", as opposed to simply providing shelter, because the conditions for such building are no longer present.

There is a world of difference between man's present life, in the twentieth century, as a technological being for whom everything, including himself, becomes material for a process of self-assertive production, self-assertive imposition of human will on things, regardless of their own essential nature, and a life in which he would genuinely dwell as a human being. This time of technology is, for Heidegger, a destitute time. But there is no nostalgia behind his discourse, but rather the opposite:

he simply emphasizes the unsurmountable distance separating man's condition of being today, from his lost condition as a "dweller". Therefore, he asks architects the crucial question:

"You say you would build. But perhaps building is simply a means to dwelling? You build lodgings and yet, you assert that man resides in these lodgings. Your end is to make man reside. But how can you claim this end if you are unaware of the fact that to produce dwellings is conceivable only if dwelling is first connected to building? You must demonstrate to me the existence of this connection." (5)

It is therefore not a matter of changing the form of the buildings. One must ask oneself what kind of thing the home (*Dimora*) is. The home is only if residing (*Dimorare*) exists as a precondition of building. The problem of dwelling lies not in the quality of the edifice, of service, or of design; we should either speak of it in its own language, or not speak of it at all: it is experiencing dwelling as a fundamental condition of one's own being, feeling oneself to be a dweller, and that, regardless of the quality of architecture. In order to be able to build an architecture of "homes", an architecture for dwellers, it is necessary to be oneself a dweller.

And yet, Heidegger finds traces of dwelling in poetry. He states that in such a dark and depraved time, it is only

poetry that can help us see once more the possibility of a "true" world. This is why he considers poetry - together with the language and thinking that belong to it, and are identical with it - to be an indispensable function of human life; it is the creative source of the humanness of the dwelling life of man:

"Poetry is what really let us dwell." (7)

Dwelling thus become grounded in poetry. To confirm that, Heidegger refers to a late poem by Holderlin (8), in which he affirms that *"Dichterisch Wohnt Der Mensch"* - it is only poetically that man dwells (9). And it is our intuition of poetry that enables us to experience the fact that, today, we live in a totally unpoetic world, that the essential condition of contemporary man is his unpoetic living. But the reversal of this condition is explicitly hoped for, even if he cannot see it happen.

Nietzsche's thought, in the face of the great city, is of course, much harsher and more sobering, since he is no longer waiting for this reversal to poetic dwelling. His thought begins where the very silence of the wait breaks off, and the analysis of unpoetic dwelling takes over. So, what is meant by not being a dweller, not-being-at-home?

We subjects who make nature *mathemata*, who violate the Earth beyond its possibilities, we are the non-dwellers. For us, subjects, what counts is the essential uprootedness of technique, and the will to power. Contrary

to what is believed and said, the subject does not live in the home, nor does he even yearn for it, but can exist only in the absence of the home and in uprootedness. Only there can he be potent, can he be productive. The language - the functions and conventions through which the subject expresses his will to power - is the sole and unique theme of Nietzschean thought.

But what is the reason for starting from an analysis of the Heideggerian criticism of unpoetic dwelling?

Against the manifold form of this "unpoetical dwelling of man", architectural theory presents itself as the continuous striving towards the objective of building "homes". What is offered as the natural purpose of architecture - to make man rediscover his essential condition of a dweller through the manipulation of spatial forms - is revealed, in fact, as part and parcel of the present crisis in architectural thinking. Unpoetical dwelling is the form that makes possible the critique of the ideology of the "home" and the ridiculous claims that architecture puts forth (and which are, in fact, that which constitutes architecture itself) regarding the reconciliation of man and landscape, man and city, man and nature, etc.

It is very important to realise that there is no abstract essence of dwelling. It is not knowable outside the

possibilities of its appearance. If contemporary man is unable to dwell, in the Heideggerian sense, it is not because architecture has failed to provide him with adequate "homes". It is not because knowledge in architecture has not yet achieved a satisfactory level of development, that man lives in a condition of essential uprootedness. It is simply beyond the possibilities of architectural language to try and remedy to the existential trauma caused by the uprooting of the values of the paleo-industrial city, and its transformation into a metropolis. This existential trauma is neither distributed in a homogeneous fashion through society, nor is it quantifiable. It cannot therefore be interpreted as a "lack" upon which architects and planners would be able to operate through their own techniques (10). This transformation from city to metropolis is only marginally a spatial transformation. Spatial transformation is a minor form of the global process of restructuring of Western society. Therefore, acting through the language of space would only marginally have any effect on this existential problem.

But when speaking of poetic dwelling, Heidegger does not at any stage mention the modern metropolis; and yet, it is precisely there that dwelling is really debased. The history of contemporary architectural and urban practice can quite easily be equated with the phenomenology of

metropolitan non-dwelling. Or it should be so, since contemporary design theory aims at restructuring itself as the recently rediscovered possibility of dwelling within the metropolis. The preaching of such a possibility is at the basis of the whole theoretical edifice upon which urban planning and design constituted themselves as disciplinary components of contemporary architecture.

Despite the clear impossibility of achieving through its own language what architecture presents as its natural purpose (the re-introduction of the possibility of dwelling within the metropolis), the entire body of architectural theory is but the expression of the various ways in which it hopes to arrive at this objective. On the one hand, we have those studies which focus on the possibility of the fulfilment of man's "needs" through the provision of adequate facilities (adequacy refers, here, to both the range of facilities and their quality). But the fallacious character of these studies is soon revealed in the definition of those needs which refer not to specific individuals or identifiable groups, but to an ideal individual or an ideal community (the dwellers) which are nowhere to be seen (11). On the other hand, we have studies with their unrequited attachment to an idealised and purer past, in which men have not yet lost their ability to dwell; this attachment is either expressed through an eclectic display of ornament, or

through the attempt to transform cities into "Potemkin villages" (12). It was Adolf Loos who, first, spoke against the backwardness of this intellectual attitude that, in his view, was typical of the architects of the *Wiener Secession*:

"I always get the feeling that a modern Potemkin has wanted to create the impression in the visitor to Vienna that he has arrived in a city inhabited exclusively by nobles" (13).

The eclectic facades of the *Ringstrasse* - redundant with pseudo-cultures - providing screens to hide the soullessness of the metropolis, and offering the urban crowds consolatory altars for the evocative rites of a spectral history.

Two bodies of research, corresponding to two forms of nostalgia: the nostalgia for man the "dweller" expressed through the studies on needs, and the nostalgia for a purer and noble past expressed through frantic excavations of history. These two forms of nostalgia are the prime targets of this study: to demonstrate that they are nothing but ideological constructs, that they can neither provide a basis for their claim, nor show their logic to be effectual; that for these reasons, they are obliged to turn this logic into ethical imperatives, or assert it as pure form within a play of reason centred on the composing, de-composing, and re-composing of the signs of

the metropolis.

To repeat: this study is not at all concerned with the definition, description, or commentary on the formal quality of the environment. Instead, the objective is to show that the forms in which architectural theory presents its purpose are primarily ideological concerns with no meta-historical justification. It is the objective of this study to demonstrate that only a language illuminated by the limits of its own possibilities - avoiding in this way the dangerous trap of universal syntheses and totalistic images - is ever capable of operating as an effective language.

NOTES

- (1) Holderlin, *"In Lieblicher Blaue"*, lines 24-38. Trans. by A. Hofstadter, published in M. Heidegger, *"Poetry, Language, Thought"*, Harper Colophon Books (New York, 1975).
- (2) M. Heidegger, *"Building, Dwelling, Thinking"*, published in *"Poetry, Language, Thought"*, op. cit., p160.
- (3) D. Spengler, *"The Decline of the West"*, Harper and Row Books (New York, 1968).
- (4) On the same theme, see also W. Rathenau, *"The mechanization of the world"*, published in *"Zur kritik der Zeit"*, S. Fisher, Verlag (Berlin, 1912).
- (5) M. Heidegger, *"Building, Dwelling, Thinking"*, op. cit., p172.
- (6) *"Shepherds"*, says Heidegger, *"dwell in the unconcealedness outside of the desert of the desolated earth"*. They guard the hidden law of the earth against the violence of the technical will that drags it towards exhaustion, by forcing it beyond its possibilities. M. Heidegger, *"Overcoming Metaphysics"*, published in *"The end of Philosophy"*, Harper and Row books (New York, 1973), p109.

- (7) M. Heidegger, "*Poetically man dwells*", published in "*Poetry, Language, Thought*", op. cit., p219.
- (8) Holderlin, "*In Lieblicher Blaue*", op. cit.
- (9) Ibid op. cit., line 32-33.
- (10) The only indications that we have of this trauma come from works of literature like J. Dos Passos' "*Manhattan Transfer*" (1925), J. Joyce's "*Ulysses*" (1922), Musil's "*Man without quality*" (1932), Kafka's "*Le proces*" (1927), or again Robe-Grillet's "*Topologie d'une ville fantome*" (1976); in films like Fritz Lang's "*Metropolis*" (1926) or "*Berlin Alexanderplatz*" (1929), or Fellini's "*Fellini Roma*" (1966); in poetry like Baudelaire's "*Les Fleurs du Mal*", or F. Garcia Lorca's "*Poet in New York*" (1955); and finally in paintings and collages like P. Citroen's "*Metropolis*" (1923).
- (11) Refer to the discussion on empiricism and design.
- (12) Potemkin, a minister and a favourite of Catherine the Great of Russia, decided to erect fake villages, in the Ukraine, with imposing displays of facades assigned to obscure the unsavoury conditions of the peasants in this part of Russia, along the route that the Czarina was to travel; hence the expression "Potemkin village".
- (13) A. Loos, "*The Potemkin City*", published in

"*Samlitche Schriften*" Vol. I, Edited by F. Gluck (Vienna-Munich, 1912), pp153-156. The "Union of Austian Figurative Artists", or as it was better known, the "*Wiener Secession*", was set up in 1897 by its main figure, Gustav Klimt. It included as well as painters such as Kolo Moser, Carl Moll, and Klimt himself, the architects Joseph Hoffmann, Joseph Maria Olbrich, and later, even Otto Wagner.

PART TWO

The root of the problem

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"What they regarded as a solution, he considered but a problem" (1).

In one of the very few recent books which have the courage of describing, not the olympian results of research, but rather, its complex and tortuous itinerary, C. Guinzburg and A. Prosperi compare research work to the solving of a game of solitaire:

"Unlike the game of solitaire", they wrote, "where all the pieces are within reach, and where there is only one figure to compose, so that the exactitude of the moves is precise and immediately visible, in research work, the pieces are only partially available, and the figures to be composed, in theory, more than one". (2)

What this quote refers to is the labyrinthine nature of analytical work which progresses not along a clearly defined path with a visible beginning and a visible end, but through a maze which exposes all the dangers and doubts inherent in research.

The reason for using such a quote is this: what has started as an inquiry into the language of design, and the various ways in which it has been formalised, led to the question of the conditions under which design reveals itself as a kind of production (3), as well as the limits within which it operates as such. The broadening of the scope of the inquiry, or rather, its transformation became an unavoidable necessity after the realisation that there

can be no credible talk about language, unless one constantly bears in mind the fact that there is no longer such a place where the complete plenitude of language can be found. The patent failures of the relatively recent attempts at a project for a general science of signs, of a semiology capable of translating one linguistic system into another, bear witness to this fact (4).

So, what are the terms in which the analysis of architecture's theoretical production can be conducted? To be more specific, let us translate this question into historiographical terms: to what reasons must one attribute the general unease and sense of guilt expressed at all levels of the profession, after the much publicized "failure" of the modern movement in architecture? This failure is said to have taken place at two levels: on the one hand, the failure to provide satisfactory solutions for people's needs, and on the other hand, the failure to maintain the link with our historical heritage. It is around this two-fold failure of the modern movement that architectural theory tried to re-organize itself and redefine its objectives (5).

But we have also witnessed, in these last twenty years, the revival of another theme: that of the "autonomy of form", which reminds one of the crisis that emerged early in the twentieth century, when the division of labour within intellectual work, and its increasing specialisation, shattered the conceptual unity of the

architectural discipline. If we are now experiencing the same kind of "rupture" as that experienced by the avant-garde movements, if we are about to enter a period of "post-modern" sensibility, it is necessary to start from a clear understanding of modernity itself; an understanding which will do away with all the myths that still surround this period of Western history; an understanding that will aim at establishing the ontological basis of the projects of the avant-gardes, rather than one which merely echoes the ideological polemics of their intentions.

Too many questions, with no easy answers to be found. This complicated state of affairs is made even more intricate by the traditional interdependence that was made to exist between the different aspects of architecture, interdependence which allows and gives credibility to the theme of a design discipline, incorporating, under such a label, different and often conflicting activities. Interdependence not as a fact, or as a mere accident, but as a cold-blooded attempt to mystify and blur the processes by which the urban environment is produced.

However, one thing that seems to be implicitly or explicitly emerging from the theoretical deliberations on architecture and urban design, is the denial of any possibility for a unified theoretical structure. And indeed, what basis is there for a unified conception of the architectural practice, for the belief in a single

theoretical structure when one is confronted, daily, with the variety and multiplicity of techniques and methods involved in the attempt to control the built environment? "We are in an era", says Foucault, "in which the world is perceived as a network that simultaneously joins juxtaposed and distant points. This space alienates the pious descendants of history, for whom the world was like a large street which developed different meanings through different ages. Neither does this space resemble the hierarchical space of the medieval city, where the juxtaposition of places referred to the value of their respective functions. The present-day space of the metropolis is made of the non-hierarchical flow of connecting disciplines and functions, of discrete aleatory currents whose movements are not teleologically comprehensible, but only stochastically analysable." (6)

With the collapse of the theoretical edifice erected by the pioneers of the early part of the century, an edifice which was aimed at resolving the themes related to design in terms of a unity, the same unity that Nicolas Pevsner labelled, in 1936, as the "Modern Movement" (7), what was thought to be a well-defined area of inquiry, more or less conditioned by economic relationships and political strategies, now appears as an intricate mixture of conflicting methods and techniques. This is the meaning of the quote above: the complete desacralisation of space that the territorial transformations and the restructuring

of the capitalist productive organisms brought about.

The concept of the modern movement, presented as a synthesis capable of reformulating, in a coherent way, the rules governing architecture and urban design, can rightly be seen as the last most relevant theoretical contribution to the debates on architectural problems. Today, this sector is undergoing a profound and critical process of reassessment, a process rendered necessary after the gradual disappearance of all the myths surrounding the production of the modern movement. The theoretical vacuum that resulted from the inability to formulate a new "synthesis" which would take over from the modernist one, strengthened the belief that we are left without the necessary tools to control this process of change, or even, not to be overcome by it.

The various and frantic attempts, made during the last two decades, at recovering a conceptual unity by having recourse to a whole array of specific referents (8), constitutes, in my opinion, a further proof of the underlying anxiety that accompanies the profession; an anxiety brought about by the clear perception of an epistemological threshold and the instrumental inability to deal with it. It is from this point of view that one should interpret the renewed interest in the origins of the avant-garde movements. The careful and thorough examination of the theoretical climate that surrounded that period is seen by most architectural writers as the

most urgent task to which we should direct our efforts, if we are ever to comprehend the inner mechanisms of the transitional process that architectural culture is, admittedly, undergoing in the present situation.

This attitude, beyond the question of the results it may or may not produce, raises two very important theoretical problems:

a)- In order to justify looking at the transitional mechanisms that were in operation at the time of the avant-garde movements, with a view of adopting similar ones, one has to assume that there exists, outside any historical conjuncture, a series of abstract mechanisms that could be put to use whenever there is a perception of an imminent threshold in the development of culture, a kind of meta-historical theory of cultural change. There is absolutely no evidence of such mechanisms which would operate again and again, through historical time. The only point of similarity that could be found is, perhaps, that characteristic of the European spirit which consists in destroying things in order to re-assemble them on a completely new basis, a destruction/re-assembly process which represents what is called a "renaissance", as Panofsky and Saxl discovered:

"One of the main characteristic of the European spirit seems to be the way in which it destroys things in order to re-assemble them on a new basis, by breaking with tradition in order to come back to it from an altogether

different viewpoint; and this is exactly what brings about the "renaissances" in the literal sense of the word. One could say that the problem of the phenomenon of renaissance is at the heart of the history of European culture" (9).

But the mechanisms of this destruction/re-assembly are, each time, determined by the particular historical situation in which they are called upon to operate.

b)- More important, perhaps, is the fact that we are, once again, confronted by the problem of the "origins" of the cycles and phenomema under scrutiny. For is it not precisely in the study of long-term phenomena that the theme of the origin appears mostly to be a myth?

This concept of the origin is closely tied up with essentialist and teleological positions according to which, every object (whether real or theoretical) has an origin from which it developed, and at which, it had its essence constituted; this essence would then be revealed in the multiplicity of phenomena. Basically, the idea of the origin is possible as a discursive mechanism whenever a theoretical analysis of the real is absent. For in a theoretical analysis, what determines the knowledge of the real is neither its origin, nor its essence, but only its present as a complex plurality. Neither the world, nor space, nor nature have a specifiable origin, and the knowledge of them cannot be traced back to this origin. It is, in fact, very easy for this concept of origin to act

as a substitute for analysis, especially in those areas which are not dominated by rigorous concepts and procedures.

The fact that historical research identifies itself with the discovery of origins, implies one thing already inscribed in the positivism of the nineteenth century: by raising the question of the origin, one is assuming the discovery of a final point of observation; a place from which everything can be explained, and from which, one can make a given truth, a primordial value, emerge from the meeting with its original ancestor. This is why this urge to trace back the origin of events has a counterpart within the same thematic. This counterpart consists in the teleological conception of an "end" or a "goal". In fact, a logical and inevitable consequence of the search of origins is that reality has an end. The difference of opinion would then be confined to the question of whether this end is a desirable one, or one that should be avoided. As in the case of a "harmonious" origin, the desirable end would be a return to this origin.

Therefore would not it be better to speak of "beginnings" instead of "origins"? In such a way, one would be able to avoid any suggestion of linear causality, but more important,

"...smash into pieces what would allow the consoling game of recognition" (10).

Therefore, one would be right to suspect that what lies behind the renewed interest in the avant-garde movements, is the conviction that we are experiencing, today, the same kind of conflicts, the fundamentals of which are as much present today as they ever were. But what could these fundamentals be? why could an interpretation of the modern movement as a homogeneous phenomenon do more harm to architectural culture than allow a better understanding of the history of its products?

It is, now, a well known fact that the protagonists of the
There is a contradiction, a historical paradox, that is rather fascinating: as long as contemporary historiography was dominated by the ideology of continuity, and was passionately concerned with defending and drawing closer to the immediate past, modern architecture seemed to be within our grasp; it seemed to be intelligible in terms of its scope and values. But when historiography started to adopt a new attitude, with no place for emotional connections, the modern movement grew increasingly elusive, and became even more peripheral and out of step as the decades slipped by. The difficulty which architectural culture reveals today in the act of understanding, hearing, or merely seeing different meanings, is the consequence of the development of the progressive linear extension of the "tradition of the modern" and the predominantly quantitative concern with it. It is not at all fortuitous that the latter tendency is leading, nowadays, to the search for models or

references in the configuration of the past. Understanding the past, including the immediate past, has nothing to do with creating an order. The shape of history is not entirely geometrical, since it reflects, rather, the labyrinthine construction of the suspected. And the emptiest manifestations of a historical order are those which arise from a quest for origins, from the need to ground any tradition on a quantitative basis.

It is, now, a well known fact that the protagonists of the modern movement defined its progressive stance as much in opposition to the empty formulae of the academist tradition as with any positive vision of the "spirit of the age". Indeed, the shining purity of machine art was rendered the more heroic by contrast to the ornamentality, eclecticism, and pattern making of the Academy. This white crusade demanded a highly visible battleground and an identifiable enemy; it found both in the brown world of nineteenth century bourgeois *Kitsch*, surviving almost intact in the dogmas and practice of the Beaux-Arts school. Therefore, underlying the manifestoes and programmes of the 1920's, is a continuous and implicit attack on the School. Ornament, already characterised by Loos as being decadent (11), is similarly pronounced redundant with the final triumph of stereometric geometry. This anti-academist discourse, however necessary it may be to sustain the polemic of modernism, encourages the formation of a myth around the production of nineteenth

century architecture. This myth, which reduces all the work of that period to a stylistic eclecticism, has tended to obscure all consequent attempts to analyse not only that production, but also the production of the modern movement itself which has been presented, since, with its image of a liberator from the tyranny of styles. This retrospective and apologetic history of modernism has only seen the struggle for the emancipation of geometry from ornament, new technology from old, and the struggle for a new functionalist ethics against academist formalism. The social basis of this new movement was similarly traced back to single currents of social utopianism: technological utopia from Saint-Simon, and social utopia from Fourier's *Phalanstery*. As for the rest, and despite some serious attempts, no method, which would do justice to the diversity and conflicting differences that existed in the architectural production of the early part of the twentieth century, was offered. This "modernist" sensibility has so profoundly engaged and pervaded our standards of criticism and modes of perception that it has rendered all but impossible to view the nineteenth century with any clarity. The removal of ornament which appears as a "definite" conquest of modern civilisation, represents, in reality, a passing phase in the development of taste. So one cannot talk about an elimination of ornament, but simply about a negation of ornament dictated by a poetics based on the principle of rationality. This negation of ornament is, above all, a question of style: only

superficially is it linked to the problem of functional coherence between the form of objects and their intended poetic purpose. In its true essence, the anti-ornamental attitude of the advocates of modernism tends to become a search for a syntax, and, as such, a specific problem of language; a problem which is of not incidental concern to large areas of artistic work in those years "on the threshold of a new era" (12)

Yet, the contemporary attempts to counter modernism by resurrecting its longstanding opponent, is simply repeating, or at least, being blinded by the same historical mystification. Indeed, to accept the mythological status of the Beaux-Arts school as the supreme enemy of modernism which had to be eliminated at all costs, amounts, in effect, to a confirmation of the ideological basis of the modernist school by accepting its own terms of reference. It amounts to remaining firmly within what can be called the "tradition of the new".

A truly critical analysis of the modern period must surely aim for more than such a neat reversal. What has become increasingly clear is that to accept the ideological rupture, which the advocates of the modern movement offer as the origin of the emergence of modernism in architecture, amounts to no more than a deliberate obscuring of the circumstances of its happening and the variety of its production. What is important is to realise the necessity to reject the lines that are traditionally

proposed as essential to the modern movement; an undertaking which implies the interpretation of the modern period as a whole, a total condition of culture which, in response to the profound industrial, political, and social changes of the late nineteenth century, resulted in a radical transformation of the concept of man in relation to the metropolis.

And just when one would have thought that this great modern movement has definitively entered the dark realm of past history, it comes back, against all adversity, claiming some faithful followers who endlessly celebrate the rituals of the founding fathers, transforming the vigorous and rigorous interrogations of the avant-gardes into stereotyped answers and the inventive substance of their experiments into a sterile game of rhetorical figures. What is more, the preachers of modernist abstraction, industrial progress, and of the "Athens Charter" (13), who think of themselves as the sole legitimists worthy of keeping the heritage of the masters, arrogate themselves the right to excommunicate the heretic. But their discourse is not new, and their reference slightly stale; it is simply change in continuity.

On the other hand, one has witnessed the late, but spectacular revenge of an american culture, victorious once again after being momentarily troubled by the crisis which followed the collapse of the "International Style". This so-called "post-modern" trend offers this ingenious

and ingenuous mixture of doctrinal inconsistency, ideological confusion, and mercantile opportunism, typical of all american products which never fail to surprise Europe with their performance and commercial efficiency. And contrary to what its detractors claim, one must say that this post-modern fashion, far from being a regression into the past totally inadapted to the contemporary world, represents, in fact, the most adapted answer that architecture can ever produce; in any case, it remains the perfect one to a twilight world of permissiveness, to one that is vowed to the irresponsible consumption of values and goods, energies and people.

The fast diffusion of post-modernism in Europe and its eventual triumph in Venice, thanks to the ingenuity of Paolo Portoghesi (14), represents, in my opinion, a serious setback for European culture and thought. All the issues raised during the 1970's, regarding the fundamental relationships between city, architecture, and history, those dealing with the nature of the architectural discipline, of the conditions of its practice, and the social status of the profession, all those issues were suddenly reduced to the dimension of charming works of art, futile and egocentric. The city became the stage set for the artists to perform the carnival-like spectacle of their phantasms; a gracious and entertaining spectacle for the benefit of a public tired of the mass consumption nature of the architectural production; a mundane and

cynical spectacle which clearly points, for those who do not already know it, to the new market for an elitist architecture; a nostalgic spectacle of an art condemned to the frantic consumption of the monumental signs which, once, made its greatness.

One can, therefore, understand better the essentially spectacular nature of the pseudo-polemics between neo-modernists and post-modernists, polemics which benefit more the various architectural magazines, than architecture itself. But as soon as one looks more carefully at their respective arguments, one begins to perceive a series of strangely common features between positions which, we are ceaselessly told, are totally irreconcilable.

Beyond the different stylistic means and techniques used by each trend, there emerges an identical conception of the architectural and urban practice, the basis of which is the isolated object, a monumental unit erected against the city and against history, while mimicking at the same time, a communication rendered impossible by its position outside the city and history. Despite all appearances, the historical references of post-modernist ideology, in its most perverted form, are as much against history as the most orthodox modernism. The language used, in both cases, is but a succession of abstract signs that have no direct or indirect relation with the material culture that was responsible for their emergence in the first place.

This so-called feud between the "historicists" and those who still believe in the cathartic nature of modern purity, when reduced to the superficial question of styles and facades, only serves to mask the absence of a real debate on the fundamental questions that architecture should be addressing. What this dispersion of energy simply does, is to allow architects to forget, for a brief moment, their progressive marginalisation from the circuits of production, and prevent them from posing the vital questions upon which, the survival of the discipline of architecture depends.

This highly condensed description of the phenomenon of modernism in architecture and of the interpretations that were made of its legacy, does hint, however, at the futile nature of the various attempts to find ready-made formulae which could be brought back to use in the context of contemporary society. Because the political context, the specific agents, and the terms in which the problems are formulated, are now completely different from those that existed in the early part of our century, the only level at which a comparison could be made is that of an imminent break in the epistemological continuity of the cultural space of aesthetics. And while the changes for the evolution of a typological and/or anthropological culture of built form are now, perhaps, greater than ever before - that is, while the theoretical conditions of an

architectural culture in which the "encoding" of production is matched to a certain degree by the "decoding" of its reception, are now better known - the fact remains that the short-circuiting strategy of today simplistic historicism has a much better chance of producing results, if by results, one has in mind an immediate social gratification and control. But in the last analysis, it simply substitutes one kind of reduction for another.

The revival of this theme of the "autonomy of form" is not simply the result of an internal debate on representation and expression within architecture, but more importantly, the outcome of the inevitable decline of the ideological role of design in offering positive visions of the future. Desillusioned as to the socially utopian promises that it made, discarded by the very forces of production it sought to control, architecture is, now, turning inwards and investigating its own specific practice. Removed from the progressivist currents of social utopianism, as much by the force of a general cultural shift as by the action of its own critics, it has now engaged in a profound re-evaluation of its status. This will to return to an ivory tower seems to indicate that the pendulum is swinging back from the desire to reform the world to the desire to start making art again. It is not too difficult to understand that this shift in interest is not the

result of a simple drying out of commitment on the part of designers who can no longer be thrilled by the potential power in their hands, and therefore, retreat into a fetish world of creativity. This shift has, in fact, very strong historical motives: the evermore declining role of architecture in the total process of social production, and its retreat into the most superstructural margins of production; the increasingly clear threat, felt by designers, to see their professional powers slowly disappearing and dissolving into a multitude of techniques which are, more and more, taken beyond the control of architecture.

This is why, today, an elite of intellectuals, each perched on his own tree, are inclined to defend an enlightened position with respect to the difficult relationship between mental labour and the institutions. They try to separate their work from all structural conditioning (i.e. the economic structure) by embarking into strictly internal polemics. This situation would not even be conceivable, except for one thing: Western countries, having more or less achieved a high level of global integration in the determining sectors of production, made the definition of a specifically cultural production, which would have the task of entertaining a selected audience, much easier, as long as this "pure game" does not compromise the efficiency of the vital

sectors. Architecture can, now, be given a discreet freedom, provided, of course, that its products are strictly *sine pecunia* - that is, irrelevancies to the working of the system. In this way, new circuits of production and consumption are created: architecture is exhibited in its own experimental theatre (15). It has neither the hope, nor the desire to influence the structures or the relations of production. No reformist hypotheses can find shelter in these new "temples" where patient priests retranslate and comment upon the codes of the modern tradition of design. This found freedom allows the opening up of ineffable spaces where to narrate one's own nostalgia: the nostalgia of the sign in search of its referent; the nostalgia of the places of discourse where architecture cannot go without losing its presence in the real world; the nostalgia of a reassuring relationship between norm and transgression, capable of making appear, from a circularity of speech, a specific plenitude. For that, emergency exits are created, and made available to anyone who wishes to accept the essential premise: the reversal of architecture onto itself which legitimizes the engagement into an uncertain path of formal autonomy; an attitude which:

"...indicates the moment when, having reached its limits, language erupts out of itself, explodes, and radically contests itself in laughters, tears, in the horror of sacrifice, and stays, in this way, in the limit of

emptiness, speaking about itself in a second language in which the absence of a sovereign subject illustrates its essential vacuity, and relentlessly breaks the unity of discourse" (16).

The interpretation of the modern movement in terms of a homogeneous phenomenon, evenly spread throughout the body of architecture in the early part of our century, can only be explained, in the end, through the role that criticism was called upon to play, in architecture. This criticism managed, and still does to a very large extent, to stay in very close contact with theory and design, and thereby, avoiding any reading of architecture that is not a mere justification of its own products. Criticism, design, and theory have always maintained a high degree of interdependence, insuring, in this way, a total impermeability to the increasingly specialised function of criticism. It is this interdependence which seeks to reinforce, against all odds, the stabilizing ties between the act of understanding and the act of thinking, which might, in the last resort, be the very reason of the backwardness of architectural culture.

However, if this state of affairs is particularly visible in the architectural field, it is by no means exclusive to it. Indeed, for a very long time, the history of ideas suffered from the same predicament, in that it credits the discourse that it analyses with an a-priori coherence.

This law of coherence is a heuristic law, a procedural obligation, and almost a moral constraint: not to multiply contradictions uselessly; not to be taken in by small differences; not to give much weight to changes, disavowals, returns to the past, or polemics; not to suppose that men's discourse is perpetually undermined from within by the contradictions of their desires, the influences that they have been subjected to, or the conditions in which they live; but to admit that if they speak, and if they speak among themselves, it is rather to overcome these contradictions, and to find out the point from which they will be able to be mastered. Coherence, as well as being the prerequisite for research, is also its end result.

Therefore, it becomes clear that in all the forms in which a coherence is discovered, it always plays the same role: it shows that immediately visible contradictions are merely surface reflections; contradiction, instead of being taken for a fact, becomes the illusion behind which a coherent unity hides itself or is hidden. In any case, under such a heuristic law, analysis must suppress contradiction at all costs, in order to allow the hidden unity to emerge. At the end of such an analysis, only residual contradictions remain: accidents, defects, or mistakes.

It is precisely to this role that criticism in

architecture has devoted itself, in the sanctified trinity of Criticism-Design-Theory. Whenever an architectural work is analysed, it is the role of criticism to show that it either corresponds to the intentions of the subject/designer, or represents the expression of a certain theoretical attitude, and that the contradictions within the work are simple imperfections which are bound to disappear with a greater experience. The consequences of using criticism for this purpose are far reaching, as far as the evaluation of contemporary design is concerned: *"The complete interdependence of design and criticism has meant that it has been impossible to identify any autonomous appearance by which to measure the history of contemporary architectural production; all the images we possess of its development, rather than clarifying its processes, end up by simply representing already determined values"* (17), these values being themselves determined by the creative and designing will of the individual architect.

This criticism has often been used as a theoretical weapon against decadence, helping to separate architecture from history by confining its products to the private domain of creative games. Walter Benjamin has lucidly identified this feature which, he says, characterises the European who does not know how to relate his life to the development of technology, because he keeps faith in the

belief of a fetish creative life:

"We have too often put the emphasis on creativity. In this way, would be creative only that who avoids assuming any function, and avoids submitting himself to any control" (18).

The law of coherence becomes, when applied to architectural criticism, the instrument used to fight the decline of the profession, and its progressive dissolution into a plurality of techniques; it becomes the refuge against the historical destiny of its own products. In this way, secure behind its walls, criticism becomes revivals and "isms".

Nietzsche has already raised his voice against this will to reconstruct a lost plenitude, to find an absolute coherence in the interaction of the techniques of domination, and stressed the necessity to assume the complete dissociation of reality. It is doubtless that, for Nietzsche, theoretical language must be understood as a plurality: a plurality of the subject, a plurality of science and of the institutions. It is only by accepting this reality in its plural character that one would be able to break the fetish which forms around a word, or a name:

"Whenever the primitives established a word, they believed that they had made a discovery when they have just met a problem; and in the illusion that they had solved it, they

had only created a further obstacle for its solution. Today, for every bit of knowledge, one has to stumble across words, as petrified and as solid as stones. And one will break one leg on them instead of the word" (19).

It is with such words that criticism, and not only architectural criticism, has often constructed impenetrable "monuments", the Nietzschean "stones"; those petrified words are piled up; their multiplicity is concealed by these monuments which pretend to give birth to an imaginary "library".

The problem, then, is to re-establish a distance between design and criticism; the problem is to recognise the specificity of the critical undertaking by breaking those magical alliances that were cemented in the "age of manifestoes" (20). Critical lucidity must start from the indictment of the complicity between criticism and design, which has succeeded in making the limits of architecture the same as those of criticism. This implies a re-thinking of the specific languages of design and criticism; both languages require a specialization that leads to their "incommunicability". Only such a specialization of critical language can clearly place contemporary architecture before its responsibilities. The development of a different critical attitude would, therefore, primarily serve to unveil the mechanisms of nostalgia. Nothing would be further from the attitudes of those

critics who assemble new "catalogues" (the imaginary library, I spoke of earlier) to fix the consoling image of structural continuity. Nor is there any longer a place for new "isms". With the knots that bind criticism to design finally untied, the route taken by architecture will certainly look very different; less reassuring, perhaps, but certainly richer in implications. Only then, could one confront effectively the problem of intellectual work in the social division of labour, or that which arises from the relationship between a "disinterested" and "scientific" research, on the one hand, and the involvement in the struggle for social change, in the other.

For these reasons, an investigation into the institutional role of design seems to me, despite the many difficulties facing such an enterprise, more than ever necessary, today, if the forms through which nostalgia operates in architectural discourses are to be revealed for what they are. The crisis of "identity", through which architecture is going, certainly entitles one to question the legitimacy of the linear frameworks by which the totality of the themes related to the production of the built environment are simplified and reduced to the level of pure representation. But despite the urgency of the task, one cannot ignore the lingering doubts as to the practicability of such an endeavour.

For, is it still possible to come to terms with such a situation, with a view of eventually overturning it? While one certainly hopes that this is still possible, it must be said, nevertheless, that it has become a task with extremely daunting difficulties. Criticism and history seem to have conspired to create a situation completely hostile to such an attempt. Yet, it remains a very worthwhile undertaking, especially if it were to begin with modest, localised, and limited studies which reject the temptation of the "big picture". One can understand, therefore, that in this sense, this study is not concerned with the construction of a complete genealogy of contemporary design products; nor will it be attempting to provide, in the end, a holistic picture which, too often, leads analysis to blunt its own theoretical instruments.

In the description that I intend to carry out, there can be no question of interpreting architectural discourse with a view of writing the history of the referent; I am not trying to find out, or reconstruct, what architecture might have been, in the form in which it presented itself to some primitive or scarcely articulated experience, and the form in which it was later organised in discourse. In other words, I am not trying to rediscover what its essence might be. What this study is concerned with, is not to neutralise discourse, to make it a sign of something else, but on the contrary, to make it emerge in

its own complexity.

A reflection on the development of a particular branch of knowledge can no longer be content with simply following the development of that body in a temporal sequence. Such a body of knowledge is not, in fact, a phenomenon of heredity and tradition; and one does not explain how it came about by simply describing the state of the knowledge that preceded it and what it has promised by ways of "original" contributions. The history of knowledge in architecture can only be written on the basis of what is contemporaneous with it; certainly not in terms of reciprocal influences, but in terms of conditions and a-prioris established in time.

Therefore, the most revealing aspect in the analysis of the structure of knowledge in architecture lies not in the celebrated controversies, which would be used as the guidelines and articulations for such a project. One must reconstitute the general system of thought whose network renders the interplay of simultaneous, and apparently contradictory, opinions possible. It is this network that defines the conditions which make a controversy, or a problem possible, and that bears the historicity of knowledge.

The positive field, within which the architectural discipline defines itself, has always been accepted as an

a-priori, and never reflected upon. From this acceptance, different schools of thought, holding different opinions, are allowed to emerge within this assumed positivity, reaffirming, in every step, its existence. My problem is, therefore, not a matter of taking part in the debates on the "environmental issues", and taking a position in favour of such or such alternative as to what is the best way of reaching the objective of building "homes", in the sense that Heidegger gave to the word. It is, rather, a matter of questioning the very terms on which such a positivity is established (i.e. is it, really, the purpose of architecture to build "homes"?). It is a matter of establishing the boundaries within which such alternatives find the same home. Rather than trying to reduce some of them to silence, by rejecting their claim as worthless, I would like to describe a certain site, a certain domain that we call architecture.

But how can one be sure that the method proposed, here, in order to arrive at a precise delimitation of architectural language, would differ, in any aspect, from any other misguided attempt at a recovery of what is called "the autonomous character" of the discipline? Is it not going to be just another one, perhaps even more disguised and confusing, under the claim of analytical rigour? To these questions, I shall answer in the following three points:

a)- This study tries to define not the thoughts,

representations, images, themes, or preoccupations that may be concealed or revealed in the discourse on the environment. The sole objective of this study is to describe this very discourse. It does not treat it as a document, as a sign of something else, or as an element that ought to be transparent, but whose unfortunate opacity must often be pierced, if one wants to reach, at last, the depth of the essential in the place in which it is kept in reserve for us to uncover. This study is concerned with the discourse in its own volume; it is not an interpretative process; it does not seek to uncover any other better hidden discourse.

b)- I am not trying to rediscover the point at which the social and the individual are inverted into one another. It is neither a psychology, a sociology, nor, more generally, an anthropology of creation. The *oeuvre* is not, in this sense, a relevant division, even if it is a matter of replacing it in its total context, or in the network of causality that supports it. The authority of the creative subject, as the *raison d'être* of an *oeuvre* and the principle of its unity, are quite alien to the method that I am trying to portray. All that will be done is the definition of the types of rules according to which, one is allowed to speak about architecture, and of the metropolis; it is the rules of formation of that articulated space that are the object of this study.

c)- Finally, this method does not aim at restoring what has been thought, wished, sought for, experienced, or desired by men at the very moment in which they expressed it in their discourse; it does not try to repeat what has been said by reaching it in its very essence; it wishes to be nothing but a rewriting. It is not a return to the innermost secret of the origin. It is the systematic description of discourse as an object.

But there is a great deal of negative work to be done: negative, in the sense that it is a matter of doing away with certain notions, certain concepts around which, the bulk of the theoretical patrimony of architecture and urban design is articulated. It is a matter of untying the Gorgian knot that links criticism and design, as well as that of revealing the mechanisms by which the themes of linear, continuous, and homogeneous development of architectural knowledge are allowed to be perpetuated. But to do so, one has, of course, to take as one's starting point, whatever unities are already there. One has to assume that there is a space, within the universe of knowledge, a certain domain of positivity that we call design. However, one will not place oneself inside this unity, in order to study its internal configurations, or its secret contradictions. One will make use of it just long enough to ask oneself what kind of unity it forms, by what right it can claim a field that specifies it in

space, and a continuity that individualises it in time; just long enough to ask what are the laws, according to which it has been formed, against the background of which other events it stands out; and finally, whether it is not, in its accepted and institutionalised individuality, ultimately the surface effects of more firmly grounded unities.

The groupings, that history hands out, will be accepted only to be subjected, at once, to relentless interrogation; to be broken up, and then, to see whether they can legitimately be reformed, or whether other groupings should emerge; to re-place them in a more general space which, while dissipating their apparent familiarity, makes it possible to construct a theory of them. Therefore, a provisional division must be adopted as an initial approximation; a kind of initial region which analysis must, consequently, demolish in order to re-organize, if necessary.

This is why we have no other option but to start from the examination of the dominant theoretical attitudes in the architectural field, and the way in which they are articulated to problems of language, history, ideology, power, and so forth. I must insist that it is not the nature of these relationships and their validity or non-validity which is of interest, here; of interest to this study are the processes by which these relationships

are brought to existence. But in spite of the greater promises that this type of study seems to hold, there is a full awareness of the dangers that it might contain, not the least being the possibility of mistaking ideological assumptions for actual facts. But to render a theoretical instrumentality explicit, from the conception of a theory to its methodological procedures, is of major importance in analysis, and the more so at the juncture when it enters the public realm, in order to avoid the ideological effects of such a discourse.

One further point that needs clarification is that the selection that had to be operated, regarding the different theoretical stances taken in architecture, is not directed as to present the variety and particularity of each approach under a global and unitary whole; furthermore, one might even contest the relevance of the examples that are chosen in order to illustrate the issues that I intend to tackle. Inasmuch as it is my programme to introduce the reader to what is spoken about, in a given territory and at a given time, or, when is all said and done, to retain only that which created the biggest stir among the widest possible audience, this clamorous approach is necessarily unjust, in that it leaves aside whatever - though, sometimes, worthy of attention - has gone ignored by the public, or has not received attention to a sufficient degree. It must be said, therefore, that one can in no

circumstances claim that the selection of texts reflects the most interesting ones in the absolute. In any analysis, a battle is fought between the inevitable subjectivity and the uncontainable desire for objectivity. The element of subjectivity is confined to the basic assumption, that is to say, to the initial choice of series. This "sectarian" choice of a definite line of research, of the "rules of the game", is made necessary not in spite of its arbitrary nature, but because of it. In order to avoid the risk of getting lost, the journey into history can only be undertaken after the few starting steps have been clearly marked out. But once the choice of series is made, the development of the thematic must then be dictated by inflexible criteria.

Finally, it might look to some as if this study is following a chronological sequence, inferring therefore a kind of positivistic conception of architectural knowledge. I do certainly not associate myself with any linear sequentiality for the simple reason that, in numerous cases, different studies, following entirely different paths and using different sets of theoretical instruments, were developing simultaneously. The necessary sequential character of writing is an intrinsic limit of this mode of expression, and not the result of an external and a-priori conception on the part of the writing subject.

The issue of the crisis in architecture was, first, raised by critics who, like Zevi, Giedion, and Banham, saw in historical criticism a potentiality for guidance in actual practice (21). This kind of criticism which blamed the modern movement for its total rejection of historical concern, conceived of the latter as a natural force which could be beneficial for the practice of architecture and urban design, if not hindered by a deliberate consciousness of the past. In this case, what is offered as a natural force suggests a historical development in which the present becomes the result of a smooth and continuous process of gradual transformation and evolution.

In parallel to this approach, or rather, in opposition to it, although still remaining within the tradition of what we may call historical criticism, there is yet another school which called upon history to legitimise its own peculiar kind of modernity. This line of thought was represented by scholars like Quaroni and Rodgers (22) who engaged into a process of re-assessment, tainted with disbelief and heterodoxy with respect to the principal tenets of the modern movement. While denying any possibility of a smooth continuity with the production of the modern movement, this school looked deliberately into the past for a renewed definition of the boundaries of architecture. The definition of this "*territorio dell'*

architettura", to borrow the very successful expression by Vittorio Gregotti (23), is believed to be the necessary pre-requisite for validating any new creative move.

Beside this renewed interest in history, research in the field of architecture followed another course, mainly in the English-speaking parts of the world. The fact that it was predominantly an anglo-saxon enterprise is probably due to the philosophical climate that prevailed, and still does to a large extent, in those countries: the very strong and dominating ascendancy of empiricist ideology on English-speaking scholars which pervaded their modes of thinking since the late seventeenth century. In this case, attention was fixed, first, on the conception and development of design methods, envisaged as practical problem-solving devices. This concept of design methods should not, however, be confused with the "*Methodologia della progettazione*" which emerged in Italy at about the same period, but with very different aims and techniques (24). "Design methods" theorists attempted, by using scientific methods borrowed from cybernetics, system analysis, and computer programming, to find ways of maximising efficiency during the design process. In this sense, design became a complex, quasi-scientific mode of functional experimentation. Moreover, the final product was to be considered as completely independent from the process that generated it. It is obvious that what these

attempts were directed at, was the global integration of production, and the elimination of all possible obstacles that might arise from ignoring the specificities of the different sectors of production. This position was clearly expressed by L. Bruce Archer in his intervention during a symposium on design methods in the 1960's:

"No attempt is made here to distinguish between architectural, engineering, or industrial design. It is an essential element of the philosophy underlying this thesis that the logical nature of the act of designing is largely independent of the character of the thing designed." (25)

As soon as this gross impoverishment of the complex nature of the built environment, reduced to the status of pure object, was realised to be, not only short of the expectations that this theoretical activity had aroused at that time, but also totally inadequate in its response to the strong humanistic concerns of the great majority of designers, still firmly entranced in their belief in the cathartic nature of architecture, all the efforts were shifted once again, this time, towards the apparently more promising area of human perception.

But if the concepts, instruments, and area of interest have changed, the general objectives remained, nevertheless, exactly the same, in that it was still a question of establishing sets of rules that could be used as practical guidelines by the practising designer. It was

by no means a matter of re-questioning the purpose, or nature of architecture; it was simply a matter of continuing the search for the elusive method which would allow the attainment of this purpose. Assistance is sought from a whole array of extra-disciplinary fields ranging from biology to psychology and anthropology, and more generally from that obscure area of knowledge that we call the human sciences. The justification for those borrowings was the perceived necessity to erect a comprehensive theoretical structure of the knowledge of man, which these disciplines are thought to possess, in order for architecture to fulfill the objectives it set itself: the creation of a "humane" environment, fit for "dwellers". Man became the prime object of research, and the satisfaction of his needs in terms of sensorial comfort and delight, its paramount objective. Finding in the white severity of the "international style" the ideal starting point for their rhetoric, the advocates of this man-oriented conception of architecture and urban design were very swift in pointing out to the univalent nature of the modern metropolis and its inhuman character, to the crisis of meaning resulting from the neglect of cultural values, and to the "oceans of emptiness" that the environment was turned into. The natural result of this criticism becomes revealed in the new direction taken by architectural thinking towards the imagery of the urban environment.

These are the terms, in my opinion, around which the cultural debate on architectural issues took place during the last two decades, and which provided it with its theoretical directions. On the one hand, we have those who dream about a problematic unity, driven by an irresistible tide of humanism founded on the ideology of an anthropology of creation, which perpetuates the idea of architecture as a mere object of consumption: this is expressed either in the form of a quest for adequate solutions to a series of arbitrarily established "needs", or through an archeological excavation of the past in search for perennial human values. On the other hand, one has the relatively younger phenomenon of a will to return to the absolute autonomy of form. This phenomenon is represented by a corpus of intellectuals, strongly influenced by the European tradition of "negative thought", who have been attempting, even in their realised projects, to bring architecture back to the level of pure art. If one can easily sense another level of nostalgia among these intellectuals, the nostalgia for the "lost aura" of the work of art, one must also recognise that they have, at least, rejected all the attempts at perpetuating the dangerous and anachronistic notion of the avant-garde. With the inevitable decline of the bourgeois myth of the "cathartic apocalypse", the only acceptable alternative that they saw left to them was to hold a firm

grip on their personal lifebuoy: their pencils.

Except for this latter tendency, which remains in any case fairly marginal within the structure of the profession, the humanist ideology dominates so effectively the present debates in architecture that one feels almost compelled to choose one's own position within one of the two forms in which it emerges - either to follow the path of the research into perception, or to look for the inalienable meaning of things as inscribed in history.

But are really these two forms so different that a declaration in favour of one necessarily means a stance against the other? If one takes the trouble of looking a little deeper than the level at which their instrumentality operates, does one not find a layer common to both? Are they both not simply superficial forms of a deeper and common agreement on the right of architecture for protection against its dissolution within strategies and techniques of domination? And beyond their respective rhetorics, does one not feel the desperate nature of their effort to re-impose the presence of man - both as the object and subject of knowledge - in the face of an already accomplished integration within specific strategies and techniques?

The themes of this complex thematic, as it emerges today, are, by no means, new ones, even if the present situation

requires specific answers. One has just to remember how this thematic was stated by Kroha, in the early twentieth century (26):

a)- Is architecture as a science, or as a praxis, or as an object, to be rationally determined as an autonomous discipline with its own laws and procedures which, when fully determined, may embrace function as well as form in a single unitary method?

b)- Or is it merely an instrument-reflex that can only reflect the form-force of the empirical demands that cause it to come in the first place?

c)- And if it is neither of these two mutually exclusive alternatives, how does this, in and of itself, affect the emotional and psychological reception at the hand of the populace?

To repeat: it is my intention to arrive at the definition of the common ground on which architectural theory establishes its positivity. Therefore, it is not in terms of the dangerous and mystificatory question of what architecture corresponds to the present-day modes and relations of production, question which would send us right back to the problem of the referent and of expression. The problem which needs to be tackled is this: in opposition to what is offered as the "natural" purpose of architecture, I would like to examine the role that it

can play within circumstances determined by existing and specific power relations; to show that this "natural" purpose is, in fact, very much the result of a historical configuration of knowledge which has, since, gone through a series of profound epistemological mutations, resulting in the revelation of the hidden ideological framework which defines and regulates the nature and scope of the preoccupations of architecture in the present situation. What the dominant discourses in architecture present as their natural objects of inquiry, critical analysis must replace within the network of relationships that link these objects to the general configuration of knowledge.

chapter on design and language.

(5) The theme of "space" and history are discussed, in

detail, later in this study.

(6) R. Tognoli, "Dei Espaces Autres", published in *Revue d'Architecture* 2-3 (1967), p.16.

(7) M. Pevsner, "Dictionary of Architecture", expanded edition, Allen Lane (London, 1973). As to the modern movement, it is probably the most widely read period of architectural history, and the bibliography on the subject is enormous. However, I would recommend M. Pevsner & F. Sel, "Modern Architecture", Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers (New York, 1979) and also K. Frampton, "Modern Architecture: A critical history",

NOTES

- (1) F. Engels in the foreword to Marx's *"Capital"*.
- (2) C. Guinzburg & A. Prosperi, *"Giochi di pazienza - un seminario sul benefico del cristo"* (Torino, 1975), p84.
- (3) The term "production" refers, here, not only to the restricted world of physical objects, but also to the production of rules, norms and regulations, institutional reforms, elaboration of theories, projects, etc.
- (4) For the experiments in semiology, refer to the chapter on design and language.
- (5) The themes of "needs" and history are discussed in detail, later in this study.
- (6) M. Foucault, *"Des Espaces Autres"*, published in *Cercles d'études architecturales* N.3 (1967), p16.
- (7) N. Pevsner, *"Dictionary of Architecture"*, expanded edition, Allen Lane (London, 1975). As to the modern movement, it is probably the most written about period of architectural history, and the bibliography on the subject is enormous. However, I would recommend M. Tafuri & F. Dal Co, *"Modern Architecture"*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers (New York, 1979) and also K. Frampton, *"Modern architecture. A critical history"*,

Thames & Hudson (London, 1980).

(8) Those referents being the various disciplines to which architecture turned in search for a solution to its crisis.

(9) E. Panofsky & F. Saxl, "*Classical mythology in medieval art*", published in *Metropolitan Museum Studies* N.2 (1933), pp228-280.

(10) M. Foucault, "*Nietzsche, la genealogie, et l'histoire - hommage a Jean Hyppolite*", published in *Semiotexte* N.3 (Paris, 1971).

(11) A. Loos, "*Ornament und Verbrechen*", published in "*Samtliche Schriften*" Vol.I, Edited by F. Gluck (Vienna-Munich, 1962).

(12) See note (6) in p28.

(13) Le Corbusier, "*La Charte d'Athenes*", La Librairie Plon (Paris, 1943).

(14) Paolo Portoghesi was the head of the organizing committee of the 1980 Venice Biennale which served as the landing base for American architectural ideas in their conquest of Europe.

(15) Indicative of that is the "floating theatre" designed and built by Aldo Rossi and exhibited at the 1980 Venice Biennale.

- (16) M. Foucault, "*Preface a la transgression*", published in *Critique* N.195-6 (Paris, 1963).
- (17) F. Dal Co, "*Criticism and Design*", published in *Oppositions* N.13 (1978), p3.
- (18) W. Benjamin, "*The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*", published in "*Illuminations*", Editions Fontana-Collins (London, 1973), p225.
- (19) F. Nietzsche, "*Aurora*", published in *Opere* Volume V, p429.
- (20) We are referring, of course, to the period of the avant-garde movements.
- (21) On that matter, see B. Zevi, "*Storia dell'architettura moderna*", Editions Einaudi (Torino, 1975); S. Giedion, "*Space, Time, and Architecture*", MIT Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1967); R. Banham, "*The age of the masters, a personal view on modern architecture*", Architectural Press (London, 1975).
- (22) On the work of Quaroni and Rodgers, see M. Tafuri & F. Dal Co, "*Modern Architecture*", op. cit.
- (23) V. Gregotti, "*Il territorio dell'architettura*", Editions Feltrinelli (Milan, 1966).
- (24) The most conspicuous differences between the two

approaches are:

a)- While the Italians kept mainly to the field of architecture, in the restricted sense of the word, design methods were concerned with the broader field of the built environment.

b)- For design methods, the key word was "fit", whereas for the "*Methodologia della progettazione*", the design process was approached in the light of cultural creativity.

c)- The paradigm that the Italians had in mind for the actual practice was the individual architect; the paradigm, for design methods, was implicitly the multi-disciplinary approach of the supra-individual organisation.

d)- Finally, for their doctrinal content, design methods adress themselves to managerial sciences, while the "*Methodologia*" draws its content from history.

(25) See the report on the symposium published in "*Design methods in architecture*" by G. Broadbent & A. Ward, Lund Humphries (London, 1969).

(26) A. Kroha, "*Sovestka Architectonicka Avangarda*", Editions Moscow (Moscow, 1973).

PART THREE

Design discourse and practice

1. THE APPARITION OF MAN IN THE SPACE OF KNOWLEDGE

The most important purpose of discourse in architecture is that of presenting the various techniques involved in the making of the built environment in a coherent, synthetic, and unified form, smoothing, in the process, over the conflicts emerging from the juxtaposition of those techniques. Therefore, it is only logical that an analysis of discourse in architecture should start by unravelling the web of relationships between the different aspects of the practice, aspects which correspond to as many possibilities, as many histories.

a)- Firstly, there is the professional aspect of this practice; this aspect, perhaps the most immediate one, is revealed at the level which consists in the manipulation of behavioural patterns, or in the organisation of a locus of productive activities (i.e. the programmes and the spatial transcriptions of a diagram), or in the distribution of activities, or in the final designation of forms.

b)- Secondly, architecture can also be viewed as a form of material production which includes the drawing of plans, the making of models, the elaboration of theories, the production of essays and monographs, etc... It is not suprising to see, for instance, the discussions on architecture and the city becoming themselves a form of

production in the strict sense of the word: it has formed its own rules, its own market, and has effectively established itself as an alternative to the scarcity of building commissions. There is also in it the tendency to offer itself as a kind of entertainment, as opposed to a systematic exploration and dissemination of critical or scientific concepts. As entertainment, it intensifies whatever tragic or comic elements it manages to find in realised or unrealised projects; the sublime and the pathetic have the power to attract attention, while the production lacking any semantic value in terms of stimulation and excitement, the greyer area of communication, is systematically excluded. Like all kinds of productions, it stimulates and arouses, in its wake, other productive activities: plans, drawings, and comments are prepared for this specific branch of the architectural practice which, following its own laws, contributes to an acceleration of the production and consumption of fashions. However, it would be a great mistake to underrate this phenomenon, or dismiss it out of hand, at the very moment when it has shown that it is not limited to recording the state of the building sector, but that it is also capable of autonomously creating the reasons which sustain a specific function of its own. There has never been such a yawning gap between the actual reality of the built environment and the virtual reality represented through the various publications specialising in

architectural issues; this gap is the visible result of two distinct systems of power, with their own specific channels, super-imposed on each other and, very often, conflicting with each other. The case of architectural competitions, as an example of a system that officially denies any fundamental link between architecture and construction, is very revealing. Since the real city marginalises any use value, it is only a natural consequence to see the strengthening of the academic and publishing power in the area of architectural and urban issues. Indeed, insofar as design appears rather through autonomous theorisations on works destined to publication than through concrete realisations, the relationship between architecture and urban history becomes more and more fragile, which allows the operative criticism to perform more easily abstract and distorting manipulations on discourses about architecture. There are even those who echo the famous saying by Victor Hugo by asserting that the age of printing cannot be the same as the age of architecture; "*Ceci tuera cela*" (1) would, now, appear as a threat on the part of the printed production of architecture to take over, in the face of the appalling decay of the "*ars aedificandi*", the art of building.

c)- Finally, there is the third aspect of the architectural practice which relates to a precise sector of the economic activity: that of the building industry and

land speculation. If this aspect does not constitute a determining factor in the formal characterisation of the metropolis, it has, nevertheless, played, in many instances, a very important part in the final shaping and structuring of the urban space.

One further difficulty, this time of a methodological nature, is that the content to be analysed is itself two-fold: as raw material, there is, on the one hand, a written discourse on architecture in the form of essays, critical reviews, theoretical propositions, methodological approaches, etc, as well as particular projects or programmes; on the other hand, one is dealing with architecture, first, in the form of a representational apparatus, and after that, in the form of a finished work, that is, its material reality. Now, the necessary separation of critical language from design language means that one cannot speak of this two-fold content in the same way. While design language deals with it only as a representational apparatus, through the elaboration of methods of regulating the manipulation of formal elements, critical language has the task of evaluating the relationship between the virtual reality of design as a representational apparatus and the concrete reality of the metropolis as the site of power struggles. What is presented by design language as a synthetic unity (i.e. a finished project, a particular theory, or a defined

methodology), critical language must deconstruct, and reveal the conflicting nature of the various techniques used in the process of bringing this project into the reality of the metropolis. Therefore, the sole purpose of critical language is that of revealing the nature of the relationship between the area of language (i.e. design language) and the extra-linguistic series (the concrete reality of the power struggle in the metropolis).

The analysis of such theories, of the logic peculiar to each of them, is the way by which it becomes possible to identify the conceptual instruments structuring design language. But these "texts" must not be regarded as a collection of statements to be analysed in terms of syntax or grammar. Instead, the most important thing is to reveal the universe to which they refer (the virtual reality of discourse) and contrast it to the concrete plurality of the metropolis. In such an analysis, there are no theories to refute; truth and falsity have equal worth as indicators within a given text:

"Within its own limits, every discipline recognises true and false propositions, but it repulses a whole teratology of learning. The exterior of a science is more, or less populated than one may think...Perhaps there are no errors in the strict sense of the word, for errors can only be identified and emerge within a well defined process" (2).

Therefore, one cannot talk about true or false theories in

the absolute, but simply about the extent to which they adhere to the structure of power relations. Within what the Frankfurt school called the "total system" (3), expressing the sense of the increasingly closed organisation of the world into a seamless web of media technology, multinational corporations, and international bureaucratic control, it is a matter of defining the place left to the traditional modes of expression. The attempt to return to the traditional means and attitudes of the avant-gardes, as a reaction against the new limits imposed by the administrative bodies in charge of the various sectorial plans, is but a sign of the widespread opposition to bureaucracy in general. But it is very difficult to go along with this desire for a return to the classical age of high modernism itself, as the prototype of the most genuine anti-establishment protest. For what is ultimately fatal to this revival of the progressive ideology of modernism is precisely the fate of modernism in consumer society as we know it today. What was, once, an oppositional, anti-social phenomenon in the early years of the twentieth century has, now, become the dominant style of commodity production and an indispensable component in the machinery of the latter's even more rapid and demanding reproduction of itself. Therefore, the legitimate desire to induce changes in the social structure cannot be realised through a direct political involvement of art (expressing, through its media,

political views), but only through the recognition that, outside the self-critical examination of its modes of working, there is only the ideological smoke of a mannered modernism, smoke which is bound to be given off at any change in fashion:

"This is no time for political art, but politics has migrated into autonomous art, and nowhere more than where it seems to be politically dead" (4).

Instead of the constant re-invoquing of the past glory of architecture as a powerful force in the planning of future developments of society, one would be better advised to concentrate on the pressing demands for the definition of its theoretical instruments and the limits of their operability. The vast amount of studies produced to that effect can help us to identify certain criteria for a critical look at architectural thinking:

a)- There is, first, the confirmation of the loss of public meaning on the part of designers, loss felt particularly strongly at the level of linguistic communication.

b)- There is also the need to check the meanings that underly the transformations - whether planned or not - in the physical environment, which has produced studies such as those of Lynch, Rossi and Gregotti on the form of the city, the territory, and which one can use in the

structuration of the urban plan (5).

c)- Finally, there is the need to substitute for the vanished linguistic unity an objective, logical, and analytical method of checking planning. At this point, the research divides into two: on the one hand, studies such as those of Christopher Alexander and of many american theorists (6), based on mathematical methods of examination, selection, and assembly of data, with the intention of reaching a kind of *architectura ex machina*; on the other hand, studies such as those of Grassi and Rossi (7) which are based on rational criteria of description, classification, and manipulation of the constant laws of forms, in order to establish logical and unified methods of analysis and planning.

A very substantial problem remains, however, namely, that no middle ground was envisaged between the various efforts to apprehend and control the dynamic phenomena of urbanisation and the concrete administrative measures. Instead, the entire polemic against the experiments of modernism in architecture was conducted on the basis of purely formal terms. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the dominant forces in architectural theory were rendered totally ineffectual by their own assumption that the environment could be made more pleasant, or more habitable, if inspired by an image of the ideal city in which ideal men would be organised into ideal communities;

this ineffectuality is the direct result of the reluctance to start from a lucid appraisal of the existing structure of power which is the real generator of urban processes.

One must recognise that our aesthetics is still, to a large extent, based on the same philosophical principles that Alberti and all the Renaissance architects have outlined; we have made the same social contract, that of voicing the ideology of the establishment. To those who still hold on to the belief that it is still possible to make man "dwell" in the metropolis, it is important to recall the warning given by Heidegger that the problem of dwelling lies, not in the quality of the buildings, of services, or of design; one should speak of it in its own language or not speak of it at all (8).

It is also important to remember that this situation stems from a difficulty pertaining to our time; it seems that there is, as yet, only one possible choice, and that this choice can bear only on two equally extreme methods: either to posit a reality which is entirely permeable to history and ideologise it, or, conversely, to posit a reality which is impenetrable and irreducible and, in this case, one can only poetise - that is, search for the inalienable meanings of things - and try to reconcile man and reality, description and explanation, object and knowledge. This choice has not been imposed upon us externally by some overriding force to which one must

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forcibly submit; as a matter of fact, the structure of architectural knowledge owes very little to the reality of the objective world which intervenes only in the process of institutionalisation of this knowledge. the structuring of architectural knowledge is predominantly the result of internal factors which are responsible for the emergence of specific discourses centered around the concept of man.

The fact that architectural discourses are articulated around man as both the subject and object of knowledge is not, as it might first appear, simply the result of a natural and benevolent tendency to look for the betterment of man's conditions of life; it is the result of a precise configuration of the space of knowledge (9). Briefly, in so-called human sciences, man has been adopted as the object of study only quite recently, in historical terms. The free, rational, and economic man is a concept which emerged only as late as the eighteenth century, and around which, a specific knowledge was built and constituted into so many sciences. Before that, there was no epistemological consciousness of man as such, and knowledge was articulated along lines which, in no way, isolate a domain proper to man (10).

It is very difficult to account for the fact that, within the space of a few years, a certain culture ceases to think what it has been thinking up to then, and begins to think in a new way. It is not easy to determine what had

caused such changes. Questions like these, however legitimate, are highly embarrassing because there is no definite methodological principle on which to base such an analysis. Moreover, the traditional explanations of the "spirit of the age", of technological changes, of influences of all kinds, inventiveness or genius, while they have a limited role to play, strike one as being more magical than effective.

So where does this unexpected mobility of epistemological structures come from? How is it that thought detaches itself from the squares it inhabited before, and allows what has been held as true before to topple down into error, into the realm of fantasy, into non-knowledge? What laws do these mutations obey, laws which, with no apparent reason, decide that things are no longer to be perceived and known in the same way?

It would be superficial to seek the causes of these re-configurations in some progress made in rationality, or in the discovery of a new cultural theme. All that one can say, now, is that these profound breaches in the expanse of continuities cannot be summarized in a single word. It is a radical event which seems to be distributed across the entire sphere of knowledge. This is the reason why the emergence of man as object/subject is so difficult to grasp. However, it must not be supposed that man suddenly appeared on the horizon in a manner so eruptive as to be

baffling to our reflection; but there is no doubt that, at the level of appearances, modernity began when man, as a human being, was given a privileged site from which to speak and be spoken about.

Once this new configuration has taken place, it became only a question of revealing the conditions of this new structure of knowledge on the basis of the empirical contents given to it. It is precisely in those empirical contents that one finds the two alternatives taken by architectural discourses (11):

a)- There are those who operate within the space of the body itself, and by studying perception, sensorial mechanisms, and the articulation common to things and the organism, function as a sort of transcendental aesthetic; these studies stem from the conception that knowledge is formed gradually within the structure of the human body, that it may have a privileged place within it, but that its forms cannot be dissociated from its peculiar functioning; in short, that there is a nature of human knowledge which determines its forms and which can, at the same time, be manifest to it in its empirical contents.

b)- There are also those analyses which, by studying humanity's more or less vanquished illusions, function as a kind of transcendental dialectic; by this means, it was shown that knowledge had historical, social, or economic

conditions, that it was formed within the relations that are woven between men, and that it is not independent from the particular forms that they might have taken here or there; in short, that there was a history of human knowledge which could be given to empirical knowledge and prescribe its forms.

One can see, now, that what architecture offers as its "natural" purpose - i.e. to build for "dwellers" - and expresses it either through discourses on "needs" based on an idealised notion of man, or through the excavation of history in search for the "lost paradise", is revealed, not as natural, but as the result of a historical re-structuring of the space of knowledge which allowed man to emerge as the centre and focus of all possible knowledge. What is presented by architectural discourse as its essential nature is revealed as but a historically determined configuration with no meta-historical values. These two alternatives corresponding to two bodies of research will constitute the object of the following discussions on empiricism, language, and history.

2. EMPIRICISM AND DESIGN

Two aspects need to be examined in relation to the first alternative of the division of thought that I have just described: firstly, one has to describe the mechanisms of empiricist epistemology; secondly, one must show how this alternative has been taken up in architectural thinking and reflected in specific methods and techniques.

This empiricist conception of knowledge appears very much like the profane transcription of the religious mode of reading described early in the introduction. For, the empiricist perspective involves a process between a given subject and a given object. It does not matter, at this stage, what the status of the subject is (whether psychological, historical,...), or what that of the object is (continuous or discontinuous, fixed or mobile,...). As such, these given subject and object are anterior to the process of production of knowledge itself. If they already define a certain theoretical field, this field cannot, however, be described as empiricist, at this stage. What will define it as such is the nature of the process of acquisition of knowledge.

The declared purpose of empiricist processes is that of the attainment, or acquisition of knowledge; this process can be outlined as follows: what the empiricist calls the attainment of knowledge is, in fact, a matter of

abstracting, from the real object (i.e. the world, society, events,...), its essence. This abstraction, or extraction of the essence is the result of experiencing the world by a subject. The status of this subject is, in turn, firmly based on a humanistic perspective (12) which idealises man and transforms him into an image of God:

"...and man, whose image the god is, is not the real man, but likewise, the quintessence of the numerous real men, man in the abstract, therefore himself against a mental image" (13).

This humanistic philosophy relies entirely on two postulates: firstly, that there is a universal essence of man; secondly, that this essence is the attribute of each single individual who is its real subject. These postulates, themselves, rely on the empiricist perspective:

a)- The empiricism of the subject: if the essence of man is to be a universal attribute, it is essential that concrete individuals exist as absolute givens.

b)- The idealism of the essence: if these empirical individuals are to be men, it is essential that each carries in himself the whole of human essence, at least, in principle (14).

As I have already mentioned, in the empiricist theory of knowledge, subject and object are given at the outset;

they pre-date the process of acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge is, then, extracted from that object to be known (which is assumed to contain this knowledge). This process of abstraction, which extracts from the real given object its essence, is a real abstraction of a real essence. Abstraction in the real sense means that it is a process similar to that of extracting gold, for instance; it is a process of separating the essence from the dirt, from all the impurities. As such, this process of separation imposes on us a specific representation of the real, as well as of the knowledge of it.

In this representation of the real, the latter is said to be constituted of two parts: the essential part, and the inessential part, which leads to a first conclusion, namely, that knowledge is contained in the real object as one of its two parts, the essential part. The process of acquisition of knowledge would only have the function of separating the two parts constituting the real, of isolating and eventually eliminating the inessential part, leaving only the essential part to the knowing subject. A second conclusion is that this process of abstraction, being only a means of purifying the real, leaves no trace in the essential part. This process ceases, therefore, to exist along with the inessential part that it removes, precisely because the sole and unique reason for its existence was the removal of this inessential part.

Furthermore, the two parts of the real are located in a specific way, in relation to each other: the inessential part, all the impurities, occupies all the exterior of the object to be known, constituting its visible part, whereas the essential part, that which contains the knowledge of the object, occupies the invisible inside. The process of knowing would, then, be to uncover the essential by removing the inessential part, exactly in the same way as one would remove the skin of a banana or unveil a statue.

What all this means is that the knowledge of an object becomes a real part of this object, its inside, or that which is not immediately visible. The structure of the object becomes the very possibility of its knowledge, present in its essence as well as in the operation of distinction between the two parts of the real object. This investment of knowledge as the real part of a real object is what constitutes the specific characteristic of the empiricist ideology. This ideology claims that the object of knowledge is not identical with the real object, being only one of its parts, while, at the same time, it implicitly rejects what it has been saying out-loud by reducing the difference between the two objects - the object of knowledge and the real object - to a mere distinction between the parts of one single object: the real object.

Let us explain further. In the explicit claim, one has two distinct objects: the real object which exists outside the subject, and independently of the process of acquisition of knowledge; secondly, the object of knowledge which is distinct from the first, being only its essential part. But the same statement contains its own denial since it refers to only one object, the real object. This paradox cannot be solved within the confines of an empiricist outlook, especially when the distinction between real object and object of knowledge is so confused and ignored. In fact, in this way, knowledge becomes simply impossible.

There is an even more serious objection to empiricism as a process of attainment of knowledge. This objection derives from the opposition of "*de facto*" and "*de jure*" which constitutes the foundation of philosophy. A fact can prove nothing with regard to essence, to the question of right; the confusion of the two is the philosophical fault *par excellence*; and this fault is known as empiricism. The empiricist does not believe in the distinction between truths of fact and truths of reason (as Liebnitz would have said). The alleged truths of reason are, for the empiricist, finally truths of fact for, the ultimate reason of a truth of reason is, and must always be, a primitive fact. He, therefore, maintains that there can be no pure reason. The founding of truths of reason resides, not in its capacity for a-priori language, but in its

relationship to this primitive and ultimate fact, i.e. the experience that reason has of it. In other words, the founding principle is not an identity of the kind "I=I", but a difference, since it is the relationship to something else. Empiricism, as Derrida put it:

"...is the dream of a thought which is purely heterological at the source. Pure thought of a pure difference. We say dream because it fades with the coming of the day, the dawn of language" (15).

What is heterology guilty of? Heterology is guilty of the same crime as that which Aristotle was found guilty of for having said "we must stop". The very notion of a primitive fact is philosophically irresponsible, since the empiricist cannot answer for this fact, that is, measure it against a still more primitive fact. In this way, the empiricist is revealed as a kind of barbarian who thinks that strength creates right.

As soon as one is clear about the fundamental structure of empiricism, the evaluation of the forms of this ideology, forms which present themselves under the innocent guise of a theory of models, becomes possible. Against the confusion between the concrete object and the object of knowledge, it is important to stress their distinct nature. What is more, the distinction is not limited only to their nature, but it also concerns the processes by which they are, each, produced.

While the process of production of real objects, or of a concrete/real totality, happens entirely in the real and according to the real sequence of a real genesis (that is, the temporal succession of a historical process), the process of production of objects of knowledge takes place entirely in knowledge and according to an altogether different kind of sequence in which the categories do not occupy the same place as in the first case.

This point needs further clarification: when it is said that the process of production of knowledge and of its objects happens entirely in the "head" or in thought, one is not trying to re-introduce, through a backdoor, an idealism of consciousness or of the mind; the thought that one is referring to, here, is not the faculty of a transcendental subject, or that of an absolute consciousness, set in opposition to the real world considered as inert matter. Nor is this thought the faculty attributed to a psychological subject, even if it is the case that the individual human being serves as its agent.

The thought one is talking about, here, refers to the constituted historical system of an apparatus founded and articulated upon the social and natural reality. It is defined by the system of the real conditions which makes of it a determined mode of production of knowledge. As

such, it is constituted by a structure which contains and combines the objects on which it operates (the raw material), the means of theoretical production which are at its disposal (its theory, methods, and various techniques) and ,finally, the historical relations to which it is subjected (theoretical, ideological, economic, social,...) (16). It is this precise system of the conditions of all theoretical production, this combining structure, which assigns to such and such thinking subjects their place and function in the general process of production of knowledge.

In this sense, any system of theoretical practice founded and articulated on non-discursive practices providing it, directly or indirectly, with most of its raw material, possesses a determined objective reality; it is this determined objective reality which defines the roles and functions of the thought of the individual subject who cannot "think" but the problems already posed, or only those which can be posed according to a specific system.

Therefore, far from being an essence to be extracted from the material world, the faculty of a transcendental subject, or that of an absolute consciousness, thought is a real system in the strict sense of the word; it is a system founded and articulated on the real world, and a specific historical conjuncture; a system with a set of specific relationships with the natural world; a system

defined by a type of combination between its raw material, its means of production, and its relationship with the other productive structures of society.

By way of an analogy, one could say that the production of discourses, characteristic of theoretical practice, constitutes a process which happens entirely in "thought", in the same way as one could say, *mutatis mutandis*, that the process of economic production happens entirely in the economy. This is what gives theoretical practice its fundamental characteristic as production, that is, the transformation of intuition and representation into concepts which are, then, offered as such to society through pre-established institutional channels.

These many serious limitations of empiricism, as a process of acquisition of knowledge, have not, however, detracted architectural theorists from producing a steady flow of papers and communications on so-called "environmental issues", suggesting that no serious notice was taken of these objections. Instead, this outlook has regularly been serving as a basis for analyses on the relationships between man and the environment.

Faithful to the empiricist ideology, these studies present man as both the essence of man and the empirical individual which necessarily possesses this essence. Similarly, the environment stands for a homogeneous field,

a given phenomenon, as well as for the set of all the physical objects which are defined by their relationship to an organism. Consequently, man/environment relations are conceived of as ideal relations in which the human nature and the homogeneous field of the environment are realised together in two different ways: one the one hand, as the empirical interaction between men, and on the other hand, as the interaction between these men and the physical objects that surround them. The theme of man/environment interaction depends on the conception of the environment as, not only surrounding man, but also as being itself viewed, known, perceived, and acted upon by man. As such, man becomes the central figure in conceptual, verbal, and graphical modes of representation, as a result of a particular configuration of the structure of knowledge. Within this configuration, the problem of the relationship between man and the environment emerges as one of the definition of "needs" and the degree to which the environment conditions their fulfilment; a theme which immediately brings to mind that old Vitruvian trilogy of "building well, on the dimension of commodity, firmness, and delight" (17).

The interest in the definition of needs, which follows quite naturally from the negative rhetoric against the modern movement, is the answer of architecture to the urgent problem of direct communication with the general

public and of social behaviour towards the images and structures of urban areas. It is in the form of three specific directives aimed at improving the visual character of the city that the expression of these concerns was given:

a)- To give the city dweller the opportunity to comprehend and orient himself in the city as part of his daily life.

b)- To provide a visual emphasis which is socially, culturally, and economically important.

c)- To stimulate civic consciousness and pride.

These directives are, by no means, new; they can, in fact, be traced as far back as the eighteenth century realm of reason, that of the Abbe Laugier and the Abbe Morelly. The revolution in science, the development of knowledge from Newton to Bacon meant that nothing could, any longer, be beyond the bounds of human control, and, therefore, of institution. The power of the environment over the mind, its effects on the body and soul, constituted, in the minds of eighteenth century thinkers, the basic forming and transforming force for man and society. This sensationalist philosophy, the ancestral form of behaviourism, functioned on the belief that the surroundings of life were the first determining factors of character; surroundings composed of:

"an infinity of objects which form, in each individual,

what we call his state of mind" (18).

From this postulate, it was an easy reversal to suggest that any morphological changes in the structure of the environment would inevitably lead to alterations in the state of mind of the inhabitants. Architects, princes, philosophers were not slow to seize the delightful implications of such a discourse. What a wondrous invention for those who sensed the intractable qualities of the existing society, and grew impatient at its stubborn refusal to see its true path!

The form of the external world, over which, complete material control was heralded as imminent, was to become the agent of redemption. Through environmental reconstruction and rehabilitation, catharsis will, at last, be achieved; the improvement of the urban environment becomes the necessary and sufficient premise for moral regeneration and social happiness. The old dream of the Enlightenment model state is given new impetus; once again, one sees a return to the attempt at joining design and mores, the form of the street to the form of the social activities for which it is the support. The ideological implications of this theme are, by now, so apparent that no more time should be spent discussing them. What is worth looking at are the problems that Williams' directives raise, and the obstacles that the attempts to follow them must overcome.

In an architectural practice understood as a process of responding to physiological, social, and aesthetic needs through the manipulation of formal elements, the first obstacle to be overcome is that of the definition, categorisation, and classification of those needs. Indeed, architectural theory has taken possession of this concept and has repeatedly used it to approach its subject-matter; a concept which has proven of great rhetorical significance in justifying whatever products it wishes to promote. Clearly, to engage into a definition of human needs, a definition which goes beyond the obvious and limited enumeration of the purely physiological ones, is engaging into an endless rhetorical discourse on human desires, values, and preferences, which would render futile any hope for "scientific" objectivity and rigour, the very argument given to promote this kind of research.

It seems to me that the only viable way to study this concept of "needs" is to look at it from a linguistic viewpoint, that is, to question the very possibility of speaking about needs as natural or as given at the outset.

The language of needs starts off from one axiom: that the contemporary city is not what it should be, that it suffers from a lack. The fact that the concept of the modern metropolis is far more complex than its immediately given physical appearance becomes irrelevant when it comes

to the "urbanistic city", that which planners and architects speak of. In fact, for them to be able to speak at all about the metropolis, it is necessary that its plurality is reduced to its physical and formal characteristics; it is necessary that the "existential trauma", of which I spoke earlier (19), is translated into the ambiguous notion of lack. By a veritable conjuring act, things become very simple: the city of the architect and planner is turned into a cluster of concrete objects and of individuals defined by their attitudes and general behaviour which are reported to the norm; in this language, the individual exists only as a normalised individual (i.e. the universal essence of man, the "dweller"), and the city exists only in quantifiable terms. the notion of lack, itself, can be interpreted in many different ways:

a)- Lack in the sense of a shortage of houses, and social amenities of all kinds, which would constitute the fundamental deficiency of the modern metropolis. As such, lack signifies all that is left to do before achieving the total "urbanistic city".

b)- Lack in the city can also refer to all those who still live on the fringe of society, or outside it and the socially accepted norms (20).

c)- The other possible interpretation of lack is that

which the "urbanistic city" excludes by definition.

Lack in the sense of a quantitative and qualitative insufficiency is directly related to the language of needs. But one must realise that what is called "need" is a social product which has gone through a process of naturalisation and de-historicization by discourse. Through all the material constraints, themselves the products of society, through all the representations that are articulated to language, a need is only one way among others for the subject to actualise his desires, a means for "*la parole vraie*", as Lacan put it (21). One has also to make a distinction between the needs that are created by a specific production system and those which come from architectural discourses, the latter being used in the search for ideal models through methods whose arbitrariness is revealed by the contradictory results drawn from similar premises (22).

However, the main problem is elsewhere. For planners and architects, a need has to be the attribute of man as a universal entity. Marxist theoreticians would object to the idea of universal needs, and oppose to it that of the historical needs of the working classes: the social needs which they conquered and which the contradictions of the capitalist system of economic relations would not allow to be fulfilled. The major point is to realise that one must not think that social needs are necessarily those which

one believes them to be. The needs to which architects and planners refer, whether social or universal, are not those that a particular individual has, but those that he should have, according to a prescribed set of social rules: a need is first and foremost a norm. It is in the name of "needs" that, for instance, throughout the nineteenth century, the lower classes have been undergoing a process of progressive integration, and that, today, we relentlessly try to recuperate those who still live outside the commonly held norms, supposedly universal. We demarginalise, or, at least, we try very hard. By the same token, we try to contain "desire" which, ignoring the norm, explodes in all directions: the "desiring machine", one should say along with Deleuze and Gattari from whom is borrowed the image of desire which flees, transgressing permanently the limits we assign to it (23). But speaking in terms of desire leaking from everywhere or in terms of marginal groups amounts to the same thing from the planner's point of view: in a way, it is to recuperate a residue which the "urbanistic city" lacks, and which, as such, is frightening and threatening to the rest of society. As with desire, it always escapes, coming back each time in different forms, forcing a constant redefinition of needs.

Therefore, the need, and through it, the urbanistic city, are but instruments for normalisation, for discipline:

needs forbid and preclude, even if this fact is less apparent because their origin is buried in history (24). But needs and norms have simultaneously positive effects, those to which Foucault was referring in his analysis of power:

"We must stop", he tells us, "always describing its effects...in negative terms: power precludes, represses, inhibits, censures, abstracts, masks, and hides. In fact power produces; it produces the real; it produces fields of objects and rituals of truth" (25).

This notion of norm and normalisation requires a series of clarifications:

a)- Firstly, to talk about normalisation seems to suggest that a society could function quite normally without the help of one single norm; a notion which, in all evidence, is absurd.

b)- In a normalised society, the norm is unique, or supposedly so, because this society, in which *"men would have nothing to envy bees for..."* (26), would have its queens with their privileged quarters and distractions. But for the rest of us, the norm is really unique: it is that by which we are measured, classified, and assigned.

c)- The norm does not know but that which is perceptible and quantifiable: gestures, performances, the way of speaking, etc. It objectifies the subject, quantifies him

and renders him quantifiable, at the same time.

d)- The normalised individual is the reified norm in its positive dimension. However infantile and reductionist the norm might be, it is only through it that one can apprehend the lack, from which this discussion started, and which, in a sense, is the negative dimension of the norm, or everything that has no place in it, everything that is excluded by definition, or, rather, by construction; by construction, because the normalised individual is, as we have seen, not a given entity, but a constructed one. The norm excludes all the processes which are at the origin of social relations, or which are their products. It also excludes all the processes by which it has become reality. The fact that the object we buy for a price is the place of invested desire, that through the logic of difference, it expresses social relations, the norm cannot but ignore it. Preclusion which takes many different forms, each reinforcing the norm itself which we can, then, believe that it is natural, and, as such, universal. This universalisation can only exist through the exclusion of the "Other", of all that is not made to represent and reinforce the norm; this "Other" which is ignored, reduced, and eventually annihilated.

e)- An enumeration of the various forms of exclusion cannot but be confused and unclear, since that which is excluded is part of what can be called the "magma of

significations", which is opposed to the ensemblist and undifferentiating logic and language in which the norm is located. Confused magma, not because it lacks a structure, but because it cannot be translated into the language of the norm. It is also the case that, through this language, nothing of real relevance can be said about society or about the metropolis, even if this language is vital to their functioning. The lack that the modern metropolis suffers from is original: it is a constructed lack. However, Two questions still remain unanswered; questions which cannot be ignored even if they fall largely outside the scope of this particular study: one is the question of the nature of the relationship between the norm and the experience of the subject; the second question is that of the nature of the mechanisms by which the same subject becomes, or, at least, tends to become the normalised individual that society tries so hard to turn him into. That the norm acts like a kind of straight jacket is undeniable; that it is less visible and can escape consciousness when it is better, or longer, interiorised is equally undeniable. On the other hand, recent studies (27) have suggested that the norm is less a matter of imposed behaviour than that of the mode of affective relations as, for instance, those between parents and children, leading to the "Oedipus complex" which is presented as universal, but which, in fact, is the construct of a rationalised and normalised society; as a

consequence, and in a somehow paradoxical way, the norm is said to shape the unconscious which it precisely excludes from its language through a deliberate omission. Psychoanalysis would, in this case, act as a security valve which enables the Western family to deal with its misfits.

f)- Finally, the norm, as negation of the "Other", and by imposing certain types of relations and a certain mode of being to the individual, is necessarily violence. To speak of the metropolis as a lack cannot but lead to violence, as is violence the rationality which founds the notion of lack, whatever sense of the word one chooses. But the process of normalisation is anything but linear. Even in the most integrated individuals, those who are located the closest to the norm, there always remains a residue which accounts for the divergence between the norm and lived experience. Therefore, one can say that the norm is never completely efficient, although it has its own efficacy.

Trying to establish a non-idealistic definition of communal needs is a task of equal difficulty. As in the case of individual needs, the temptation is to try and figure an ideal community of aspiring men and women, joining together to express common needs and hopes regarding their environment. However, as one well knows, in contemporary society, social groups are formed, not in view of fulfilling some kind of shared aspirations, but,

instead, in view of defending sectorial interests which, in many cases, are antithetical to those of other groups. The only alternative left to designers is to try and formulate their own model of this ideal community, with all the problems that the reliance on arbitrarily conceived classifications carry with them.

At this stage, I would like to mention that this discussion on the language of needs was not intended as a validation of a metaphysics of desire in the manner of Deleuze and Gattari, for instance. The issue, here, was simply to reveal the process of naturalisation, through the language of needs, of historically produced normalised attitudes, and to show the mystificatory power that this language has in transforming its ideology into a natural and universal discourse.

This language of needs serves two very useful purposes, as far as empiricist theory in architecture is concerned: on the one hand, it serves to consolidate the position of man as the subject and object of knowledge; on the other hand, by being presented as a way of objectifying the process of design through identifiable and quantifiable needs, it also serves as a guise for highly subjective and idealistic stances.

This is why the bulk of the research relying on the empiricist outlook found, in perception, a very favorable

terrain of experimentation on which to establish itself. Beyond the specifics of each individual approach, there is the understanding that perception, as an area of inquiry, is vital, since it remains the only source of information about the environment, and that it is ultimately related to the adaptive functioning of the organism. The question always raised by those studies is that of the definition of the function of sensory perception in the total behaviour of the human organism. Now the answer to this question is of vital importance, since it determines to a large extent the manner in which perception, as a conceptual tool, is used in architectural discourses.

Perception is conceived both as a phenomenal experience and as a directive for action. Because general explanatory principles for perception have not been found, it seems to me that both the magnitude of the complexity of perceptive phenomena and the nature of the complexity have still to be grasped. Studies on mental mapping as a cognitive process of experiencing the environment, the identification of the salient characteristics contributing to one's awareness of the environment, and the analysis of the meanings attributed to specific contexts, are all constitutive forms of discourse in contemporary architecture. The objective of these various studies is the identification of possible strategies which could be used to conceptualise the environment, so that a

comprehensive theory of the acquisition and utilisation of information about environmental systems can be developed.

One of these strategies which had a great impact on design theory, despite the fact that it had long since been totally discredited, is that which uses the biological notion of evolution. This evolutionist approach overcomes the problems associated with hierarchical classifications by postulating that "needs" ought to be based on the physiological, psychological, sociological, and anthropological aspects of human behaviour. From there, those needs are translated into levels of sensory perception, according to the category to which they belong.

For the evolutionist, the lower level is largely limited to the avoidance of noxious situations and to the approach to the nurturant ones. As organisms grow more complex, sensory perception enters into many other aspects: distance perception, identification, communication, sexual attraction, and even more complex social relationships. In man, this trend is accentuated, and perception, in addition to all the previous function, acquires relevance to many other processes far removed from the adaptive significance observed at the lower levels - language and aesthetic experience, for instance. In line with this conceptual framework, Abraham Maslow offered, in 1954, a classificatory table which was going to have a great

success; a table in which, all human motivations and aspirations were to find a place at corresponding levels (28). He suggested that human needs could be arranged in a hierarchical order, the higher levels taking precedence over the lower ones. His hierarchy in ascending order is as follows:

- 1) Physiological needs such as thirst, hunger, cold,...
- 2) Safety needs such as security and protection against physical and/or psychological harm
- 3) Belonging or love needs which concern the relationship of responsive, affectionate, and authoritative needs
- 4) Esteem needs, or those of an individual to be held in esteem by others
- 5) Actualisation needs representing the desire to fulfill one's own total capacities
- 6) Finally, cognitive and aesthetic needs, representing the thirst for knowledge and the desire for beauty for its own sake.

According to Maslow, we have structured our whole environment in such a way as to meet as many aspects of those requirements as possible. It is easy to understand the attractiveness of such a thesis, in that it seems to provide a "rational" basis, a much needed "scientific"

grounding for the practice of design. But this attitude might, as easily, result in deterministic stances which have plagued architectural thinking for such a long time (29). The problem with such a hierarchical order of classification is that it seems to suggest that the process of production of the built environment is, itself, one of a hierarchical type; that it would be left to the individual to determine the level up to which his design must correspond, according to his own beliefs and philosophy. Indeed, a restricted reading of the modern movement has been made, following this order of classification: the earlier conferences of the CIAM being seen as concerned with the impact of the environment on the lowest order needs, while the later meetings - like that of Otterloo, in 1959 - as concerned with the higher order of cognitive and aesthetic needs (30).

Within the same perspective, but with a totally different approach, we also have studies based, this time, on a cultural model of society, such as that of Rapoport, for instance, who considers cultural factors as the major contributors to the shaping of the environment. By referring to anthropological studies on "primitive" communities, he was able to refute the deterministic argument and draw some principles of organisation of space which, according to him, are as much present in today's metropolises as they ever were (31). With Rapoport, it is

the symbolic, rather than the utilitarian, which takes precedence. Lewis Mumford had already started the argument when he claimed that: "*Man was a symbol-making animal before he was a tool-making animal*" (32), that he reached specialisation in myth, religion, and rituals, before he did in the material aspect of culture, and that ritual exactitude came before exactitude in work.

This argument contradicts in every point the evolutionary model offered by Maslow's classification, since man's achievements are said to have resulted more from the use of his internal resources than from the need to control the external environment or to secure more food for himself. In the cultural model, it is, therefore, the primacy of the mythic and poetic function of symbols which matters, rather than their rational and practical function.

The same contrasting views have been expressed by, Redfield on the one hand, and Childe on the other (33). While Childe was strongly in favour of a materialistic approach, Redfield opposed him and stressed the primacy of what he called the "moral order" over the "technical order" in primitive societies. Early societies, says Redfield, were, to a great extent, ethical and, their moral order is stronger and more articulated than their technical order.

This cultural model presents, nevertheless, a substantial problem: one has to accept that the supremacy of the symbolic order is still valid in contemporary society; one has to accept the leap from the study of early societies to that of the modern ones, from the early ways of organising communal and private space to the infinitely more complex urban communities. This leap can be performed only on the basis of a belief in constant, meta-historical, and universal characteristics of human nature. This problem was foreseen by Rapoport who warned that his analysis should only be taken as a partial contribution to the debate on environmental issues, and that, as such, it offers no complete model of organisation of space; nor does it have, he said, any immediate practical purposes.

However, if it is right to point to the limits of relevance of a particular study, one cannot agree with the arbitrary fixing of those limits, motivated only by the particular interests of the author. It is not right to acknowledge the complexity of a problem and, then, reduce it to a level which suits one's own interests or capacities. Analysing the development of urban forms with the help of some perennial patterns which are supposed to permeate through the entire body of human and social behaviour is, certainly, a very attractive proposition; it allows the formulation of a synthetic view as to how the

physical environment is produced and how forms emerge; but no explanation for this belief in perennial patterns is provided; a belief which remains firmly within the humanist ideology, scarcely hidden behind a claimed scientifism free from any ideological connotation.

It will never be said enough that a uni-dimensional reading of the urban dynamics (in this case, a cultural reading) cannot but give a very distorted interpretation of this dynamics. Moreover, the argument that the combination of a series of one-sided readings will provide, in the end, a satisfactory picture is fallacious, since it fails to recognise the uniquely phenomenological character of the metropolis. The return to a concern with the symbolic imagery of the city is not negative in itself; what is negative is the split that such a return might provoke between utopia and reality, between a lucid structural reading and an evasion into a world of uncontrolled images.

This discontinuity is most explicit in the studies of urban forms carried out by Kevin Lynch who, in many people's mind, rightly emerges as the only scholar whose concerns are the nearest to the problem of urban cognition and communication. His much publicised work is one of great interest insofar as he kept thinking about the city in the same terms as the consciousness which perceives it; in other words, he was concerned with it as it appears to

the mind of the perceiver. His work remains, nevertheless, within the thematic of providing adequate answers to human "needs", through the manipulation of urban forms as he explicitly recognised:

"In Western culture, general and accepted goals would probably cluster around the individual human being, around the idea of man as the measure" (34).

The axiom of man as the measure leads Lynch to establish, on the one hand, a hierarchical classification of those "needs", and on the other hand, a categorisation of urban forms. However, he stopped short from establishing a direct correspondance between the two tables, avoiding in this way the accusation of a simplistic determinism. He even dismisses any thought of a direct correspondance by saying that:

"Regardless of any influence it may or may not have, physical form is not the key variable whose manipulation would induce change" (35).

Instead, he describes the relationship between the categories of goals and forms as invitational, or as based upon prior experience:

"...it involves running through the list of descriptive categories of city forms and choosing, by intuition or prior experience, those general objectives that seem most relevant to that aspect of form" (36).

The work of Lynch is, in reality, extremely ambiguous. From the semantic point of view, there is a whole vocabulary of meaning in his language when, for instance, he gives great importance to the readability of the city; and in good philologist, he has the sense of the discrete units. He tried to uncover, in urban space, the discontinuous elements which would resemble the phonemes and semantemes found in linguistics; these discontinuous elements - which he called paths, edges, districts, nodes, and landmarks - could quite easily become semantic categories. On the other hand, his conception of the city remains more Gestaltist than structural; and the operation of abstraction which he performs on the urban structure, described as the spatial distribution of the social network of activities, renders his apparently sophisticated analytical apparatus meaningless from the point of view of the process of development itself. By integrating elementary studies of urban sociology with the tradition of Gestalt psychology, he produced a model of structural organisation which aspires to introduce total form to the city, to make it a place where the individual and the group can be refamiliarised with the metropolis, dense with significant places, designed and used with social purposes in mind. It is the same old utopia, except that in this case, the spectre of anonymity is no longer dispelled with the nostalgic recourse to the "community", but with the equally nostalgic appeal to images which

derive from the common determinator of a hypothetical "collective will" for images and forms. What Lynch's work offers is, in substance, the same ideas of a resuscitated Camillo Sitte on a much larger scale (37) which, in the last analysis, might be the very reason for Lynch's short-lived and mostly mundane success.

The list of models, devised during the last two decades, which rely on a combination of humanist and empiricist perspectives is endless. However, from the few examples that I have chosen, here, to illustrate the way in which the affirmation of man as the subject and object of all possible knowledge has taken place in design discourses, one can see the problems that the empiricist outlook raises. That they failed to arouse any lasting enthusiasm was a predictable result. The failure to account for the necessity of a direct linkage between hypotheses of new models of production and institutional reforms and to take notice of the new division of labour, which has left architecture in the most superstructural margins of production, results from the reluctance of architects to re-assess the values and purposes of design; reluctance which meant that all those models are obliged to take refuge in pseudo-neutral anthropological or psychological arguments in order to protect outdated humanistic beliefs and an already shattered conceptual unity.

In the absence of any clear understanding of the process

of production of discourses, these models have no other recourse but to analogy and metaphors. It is not that analogical thinking constitutes a risk *per se*. Where the danger lies is in the fact that analogies have a sneaky way of taking over our perception to the point where we begin to forget the differences between the two halves of the analogy, and start to take one for the other. It is this over-extension of the useful function of analogy which shows most clearly the absence of a coherent and lucid apprehension of architectural discourses as ideological mechanisms. Expressions such as "machine-like" or "organic structure", once carried beyond the level of pure metaphor to which they belong, cannot but generate doubt as to the seriousness of the theoretical enterprises in which they are used.

In the more recent years, structuralism and semiology appeared on the agenda of architectural schools. One can immediately see the positive contributions that they have made, not the least being the provision of an elusive scientific basis. Properly speaking, there is no definable structuralist philosophy which could, for instance, be opposed to the phenomenological school. It is, after all, only the name of a scientific method which had, nonetheless, an incontestable effect upon philosophical discourse. Structuralism can be called the common denominator of a number of contemporary systems of

explanations of the patterns of human behaviour, in terms of cultural structures consciously or unconsciously adhered to, and which manifest themselves in diverse spheres of behaviour. What structuralism is ultimately concerned with is the establishment of the facts that are "true" to the human mind, rather than those about the organisation of any particular society, or groups of societies. The individual or existential subject does not, in fact, have a role in structuralism, but the epistemic subject does. The epistemic subject is that cognitive nucleus which is common to all subjects at a certain level of abstraction. The main appeal of structuralist methods is due to the longing for an approach to human affairs which could be grounded in social and cultural realities, after centuries of idealism, as well as for an approach which would be synthetic, after generations of positivist epistemology which reduced history to a tally of names and dates, and the production of the environment to a mechanistic process.

However, the greatest impact that structuralist methods have had in philosophical discourse is that it had brought about a completely new attitude towards "man". It is Francois Furet who, first, noted this change of attitude which resulted from the precedence given to the epistemic subject over the existential subject. In one of his articles, he said that the fascination felt by the French

intelligentsia for the structuralist method devised by Levy-Strauss was due to the fact that :

"...simply and progressively, the structuralist method of description of a man-object has taken the place of a description in terms of a man-god" (38).

Structuralism, therefore, helped to cause the first breach in the hitherto complete supremacy of man in the sphere of knowledge. With the advent of structuralist methods, the reference point is no longer man, but the structure within which man, as only an element, is dependent on the whole. Man relinquishes his position as creator and giver of significance to the totality of things. Structuralism affirms that it is not man who has created the humanities; it is the unconscious collective awareness of our time which has constituted man as a subject. The discovery of the "it is" replaces the "I"; the world began without man and will certainly end without him, too.

The notion of structure as a displacement of the subject in historical analysis has come, in the most recent times, under strong criticism for what is seen as its deterministic and functionalist connotations. Anderson, for instance, demonstrates that the attack on the subject, by putting the linguistic notion of structure at the centre of historical analysis, ultimately destroyed any coherent definition of structure by rendering it completely arbitrary:

"What Derrida had seen, acutely, was that the supposition of any stable structure had always been dependent on the silent postulation of a centre that was not entirely "subject" to it; in other words, of a subject distinct from it. His decisive move was to liquidate the last vestige of such autonomy. The result, however, was not to achieve a higher-order, now entirely purified structure, but the very opposite: the effect was a radically destructuring one. For, once structures were freed from any subject at all, delivered totally over to their own play, they would lose what defines them as structure - that is, any objective coordinates of organisation at all" (39).

These remarks led Anderson to conclude that the "other side" of structuralism was a randomization of history. As a result, one has seen, during the last five years, a renewed emphasis on the role that human action plays in creating history and in generating the structures within which the actions of others are taken. Structures are, now, said to be a result contingent upon and modified by human agency; and the question that has taken priority is how can the notion of structure be reconciled with the empirical variety found in concrete societies and which is apparently the result of human agency (40).

In response to this question, one author, Giddens, advances the notion of "system" as a way of re-introducing

agency, openness, and diversity in history, in opposition to the deterministic structuralism which assigns to the object a position prior to that of the subject. However, Giddens remains sympathetic to the notion that social action is structured, since there are vast realms of individual actions which cannot be explained by their authors discursively, and so much of history seems to be intended by no one. His problem, then, is how social theory can be ordered but not determined, and individual action be free but not random. His solution was to propose a kind of "unintentionally intentional" action based on practical, or non-discursive knowledge (41). The knowledge of this type of action is:

"...not usually known to those actors in explicitly codified forms; the practical character of such knowledge conforms to the Wittgensteinian formulation of knowing a rule..." (42).

Giddens introduces the notion of systems as ensembles of social practices that are both medium to and outcomes of social structures because they are composed of embedded social practices. Normally, systems routinize action, but they do not prevent the exercise of agency or the unintended effects of purposive actions from generating system and structure changes. He asserts that structures are not objective independent social forces, but simply the transformation rules among sets of concrete social

practices. As such, structures have only a "virtual" existence because they exist as moments recursively involved in the production and reproduction of these systems of social practices; in other words, they are merely instantiated in action.

Most actions are tracked into systems of routinized social practices. Individuals embody an implicit and practical know-how (*savoir-faire*, in french), which enables them to carry out these routines: they are "knowing actors". systems change because the purposive actions of individuals often have unintended effects, notwithstanding the fact that actors are knowledgeable; in turn, changes in situated social practices determine the survival of structures. The reproduction of systems is accomplished by the same knowing actors; their choices to act, or not to act, mean that structures are reproduced only in the instant, in action. Structures exercise no functional control over individuals; they cannot provide a basis for a historical teleology, not even of a probabilistic character.

Here, Giddens explicitly compares structure, system, and action with Saussurian linguistics in which language (*la langue*, in french), or generative grammar and syntax, is opposed to speech (*la parole*), or the use of grammar and syntax in individual action. Individuals, for Giddens, create social practices in using grammar and syntax, and,

in fact, determine the evolution of grammar and syntax itself.

As one can see, the reinstalment of human agency is felt, by contemporary social theory, as necessary in order to counter the functionalist and deterministic explanations based on the reification of structure which depreciates the role of active agency by people. The overextension of the usefulness of structural methods of analysis to all aspects of social action was bound to end up in reductionist explanations which people, like Giddens, strongly oppose. This is why a clear definition and delimitation of the usefulness of the notion of structure is of prime importance.

In fact, the only acceptable definition of structure is, in my opinion, that used by mathematicians (43). An analysis of the structural type is so only when it presents a given content as a model; in other words, structural analysis begins with the structure, i.e. with the relations that, defined in a purely formal way by certain properties, characterize a set of elements, the nature of which is not specified; it does not begin with a specific content. From the basis of the structure thus established, the analysis can, then, proceed to demonstrate whether a certain content (social, political, cultural,...) is or is not a model of that structure, or a representation of it:

"Meaning is no longer the given, whose obscure language must be deciphered, but on the contrary, what we give to the structure in order to constitute a model" (44).

This is the aspect that the over-enthusiastic uses of structural analysis, including those in architectural theory as we shall soon see, have not taken note of. Structure is not an overriding principle of organisation to which all kind of practices must submit; it is only a set of formal relationships which have no material existence. There is a world of difference between a formal construct (i.e. a model) and the concreteness of social practices; and the complete submission of these practices to the model cannot but lead to reductionism, as Giddens rightly suggests.

When structuralism is spoken of, one does not, as a rule, think of the method of structural analysis as such, but rather of its application to sign systems. In theory, nothing predisposes structuralism to any privileged position in the science of signs; nor does anything oblige this science to be exclusively structuralist. There is, nonetheless, an affinity between the method and the field of research. Communication is the notion by means of which the two - sign systems and analysis in terms of structure - are brought together. Here are the three canons of the structural analysis of communication systems, or, as it is better known, semiology:

a)- The signifier precedes the signified: language is not a medium, and the message is not the expression of an experience. Rather, it expresses the possibilities and limitations of the code employed, when compared to experience; hence the difficulty of articulating the unforeseen.

b)- Meaning arises out of non-meaning: the only way for the speaker to generate meaning is to produce a message bereft of meaning, a message that the code has not foreseen (a message which might be called poetic). Non-meaning is, therefore, the repository on which one can draw in order to produce meaning (the "floating signifiers" used by Levy-Strauss, or Lacan's "signifying metaphors"); as such, meaning is the effect of non-meaning.

c)- The subject submits to the law of the signifier: the code and not the emitter decides what will and what will not be permitted. Speech is not a gesture which renders the meaning of the experience still dumb into verbal expression, for, dumb experience has no meaning by itself. Meaning appears with the signifier, or with the first opposition between yes and no, between something and nothing. The meaning of the message is not the meaning of the experience; nor is it the meaning that experience would have, prior to all expression.

7. LANGUAGE AND DESIGN

Lacan has, in many occasions, insisted on the heterogeneity of language and experience. Man's obligation to express his needs, in the form of a request made to another, subjugates him to the signifier. This submission induces an effect of aberration in him: desire. Man desires insofar as he is a "subject", which no longer means the absolute origin of meaning, but literally "subjected" to the signifier (45).

The affinity between structural analysis and the science of signs, joined in the analysis of communication systems, is what provided the basis for the application of semiology in architecture. For, if architecture and the metropolis came to be seen as systems of communication, it would, then, be possible to analyse their products in terms of elements of these systems which have to be deconstructed. Architecture as a linguistic system of communication is the theme analysed in the following part.

3. LANGUAGE AND DESIGN

"If I had to create a new Robinson, it would not be on a desert island, but in a city of twelve million people where he would be unable to understand the language. This, I believe, would constitute the modern form of myth"

R. Barthes

The emergence within design culture of the language problem is a precise answer to the crisis of contemporary architecture and to the demand for a rigorous theorisation of design problems. The proliferation of studies on semantics and semiology applied to the built environment cannot, therefore, be simply due to the snobbish tendency to keep up with the linguistic vogue, as it has been sometimes suggested (46). The attempt to bring all the sciences of man under the unifying sign of linguistics is the result of the perception of the dissemination of life and meaning into a multiplicity of techniques which makes it very difficult for man to realise his desire to englobe the totality of the world into one single "Logos". Moreover, the realisation that we are moving among signs, conventions, and myths which offer us, through innocent images, artificial processes as being natural, is where semiology's search for the underlying meanings comes from. It is hoped that the study of architecture as a sign system would bridge the gap between the trivialities of

behaviouristic sociology (which were examined in the previous part) and formalism which seems to be its only alternative. However, depending on the use made of its instruments, linguistic analysis could become a formidable instrument for de-mythification, or just another transient fashion. As an instrument for de-mythification, it could serve to reveal what has become of the role of architecture: a reduction to dangerous persuasion techniques, or, in the best cases, to the broadcasting to superfluous and rhetorical messages.

For this reason, those who keep warning us against the new studies on language, saying that they hide the complexity of the architectural practice, its ambiguous relationship with society, and its struggle for institutional, legislative, and educational reforms, are right so far as the explicitly evasive research goes; but they are not right about the research which recognises all those problems as being constitutive elements of the language itself.

The attempts at assimilating design processes to language have a two-fold purpose: to the socio-professional crisis of identity, they come as a reaction against the progressive erosion of the field of competence of architecture. It is worth remembering that the same interest in linguistic processes was shown after the creation of the "Ecole Polytechnique", in the eighteenth

century, which severely reduced the monopoly that architecture exercised over all aspects of building. The same concern re-emerged in the last twenty years when the crisis in the doctrinal content, the teaching, and the practice of design has developed in successive waves. In this unstable course of development, the linguistic analogy in architecture seems to serve two contradictory goals: the assertion that architecture can be assimilated to language helps to shore up the image of the artist/designer; it, thereby, prolongs the effects that had formerly been sought by literate designers who knew how to clothe their art with the dignity accorded to the humanities. Under this guise, the survival of the type is assured as much as it can be, in the name of its poetic capacity. On the other hand, by persistently claiming for architecture a linguistic competence, architects are able to present it in the form of "pure" science; this pseudo-specialisation maintains the hope for preserving a place for themselves in the technological structure of society as experts in social communication.

Having said that, the power of professional interest is not, in itself, a sufficient explanation for the extraordinary success of the semiological studies in architecture. For, the fact that it is to language that architectural thinking turned, when it was troubled, remains to be explain. While the external pressures might

have given impetus to this epistemological phenomenon, they cannot have prescribed the forms that it took or the routes it followed. One has to assume that there must be a linguistic substance, internal to architecture, which resulted in all those studies. No doubt that this type of experimental research has helped to restore substance to the debate over the nature of the relationship between the two Saussurian parts of the sign (the signifier and the signified); a relationship which was rendered rather obscure and ambiguous by the experiments of the historical avant-gardes (47). The search for signifiers, as well as the investigations into the ability of a given form to transmit clear messages, soon became generalised in a systematic application of semantics to architecture from scholars like Umberto Eco, Renato de Fusco, and Charles Jencks. It was Eco who, first, declared his conviction that symbolic systems belong to the order of language and, therefore, that the possibility of history must also reside in language; he saw architectural language as:

"an authentic linguistic system, obeying the same rules which govern the articulation of natural languages" (48).

Following Eco, Alberto Silipo tried to apply the conventional definition of grammatical structure, as it exists in natural languages, to design. According to him, grammatical analysis stands as a universally valid critical instrument at the disposal of architects and

critics. In his "Grammatica", he says that:

"Considering the architectural activity to be a set of operations designed to establish cognitive relationships by means of spatial realities, and considering that the architectonic organism as a structure, an instrument of communication and knowledge, grammatical analysis becomes the principal instrument at the disposal of whoever seeks, not only to grasp the entire range of signification of a particular spatial structure, but also to historicise it by going back to the methodological matrices that have determined this structure, and by grasping the relationships that exist among the figurative, the technological, and the functional elements which make up the structure and the more general historical, social and artistic context to which it refers" (49).

Warnings against the unreflected use of linguistic methods of analysis started soon to appear; caution against a complete reliance on those methods was recommended. Take Paolo Portoghesi, for example, who remarked that:

"The analogies between design and language have often been advanced as have those between architectural civilisation and language; and attempts have often been made even to transfer linguistic terminology to criticism in architecture. The most authoritative conclusions of these experiments have been, however, ambiguous and limited" (50).

One could also mention Bruno Zevi's scepticism towards the over-enthusiastic espousal of linguistic themes; a scepticism which stems from the relative poverty of conclusive results, in comparison to the amount of efforts invested. He attributes this poverty to the fact that, in his opinion, scholars have been more concerned with finding in architecture the same ingredients and laws as those of verbal languages, than with architecture itself: *"Despite the popularity enjoyed by these studies, they have, nevertheless, not been marked by any resounding effect, since they have not ploughed the specific field of architectural language"* (51).

Semiology, the general science of signs, as foretold by Ferdinand de Saussure, propounds a notion of meaning which assimilates language, gestures, art, and which offers to unravel every human phenomenon by bringing it into the sphere of an all inclusive theory of significance (52). The intellectual foundation of this claim depends on two straightforward conditions:

a)- that all human behaviour can be seen as expressive, as revealing thoughts, feelings, intentions, etc...Often, as in dreams, behaviour may reveal feelings which are not immediately accessible to the subject; this is a point likely to please the advocates of architectural semiology, since it nurtures the belief that the meanings revealed by

semiological analysis may be something which has yet to be recognised by those who actually use and observe the signs.

b)- that the modes of human expression may be thought of as having a certain structure, a structure which is also exhibited in natural languages.

The leap from language to architecture is made with the help of the doctrine of analogy which, as a discursive mechanism, can be traced back to the Renaissance world where it played a vital role in structuring the entire knowledge of that period of European history. This doctrine, linking artistic production to knowledge, first appeared in France, in the writings of men of letters who sought to subsume all the arts within a universal theory of expression (53). Each time it appeared, however, analogy was used for no other purpose than that of validating competing morphological structures by grafting them onto the prestige of literary production; it was simply concerned with making explicit the process of combination, the constituent of every project, by relating it to a fundamental and commonly held knowledge. This mode of didactic commentary corresponds to a desire to legitimize the poetic of formal compositions by relating it to a more established mode of expression (i.e. literature). This kind of comparison was unable to sustain any marked theoretical development because of its

unscientific and exclusively analogical character; in other words, the recourse to linguistic analogies, as it appeared first, served only at the level of example, and not in terms of a consistent model. There was no theoretical framework which could have provided the individual linguistic translation with a firm basis, the reason being that linguistics, as an articulated discipline, has not seen birth yet. The development of linguistics itself was an indispensable condition if language were ever to be used as a model for other modes of expression. On the other hand, the primitive and somehow crude attempts by the Renaissance writers to make a language out of architecture and their subsequent failures must not lead one to believe that the more sophisticated forms of linguistic theory, which appeared afterwards, are in any way more capable of legitimising the use of analogical thinking. Since we are still lacking any viable model, one can only go as far as saying that each attempt made to assimilate the processes of architectural production and consumption to those of natural languages must be judged solely according to the extent to which it manages to show its usefulness in the actual practice of those who claim its efficacy.

The realisation that the city has become deprived of meaning, that its buildings have lost their symbolic value, and that perception has become an absent-minded one

(54) led to two choices: either to accept the loss of the semantic dimension and assume this loss as the programme for a technological utopia, or to address semiotics as something capable of making pure signs speak and signify. These two tendencies were expressed in two distinct bodies of semiological research:

a)- A semiotics as mathematics of the sign, borrowed from the studies of Pierce and Morris (55). This tendency is typified in the work of Max Bense and the Stuttgart "Technischen Hochschule" who do not give any a-priori method of analysis, but who indicate, instead, the reciprocal information between architecture, semiotics, and design in general (56). Bense's semiotics, which works at a highly advanced level of theory, aims at integrating itself in the development and at forecasting the future stages of the production of industrial objects. As such, it opens the way to a global technology capable of quantifying, in terms of information theory and aesthetic theory, everything that relates to meaning. By using this approach, Bense was able to show that an efficient semiotic system could be used instrumentally in explication of its own potential, thereby reducing the issue of the signified contained in the sign to the level of quantum of information. What Bense's semiotics indicates most clearly is that a purely structural analysis cannot "explain" the sense of a work; it can do

no more than "describe", since the only logic at its disposal is that based on *yes-no, correct-incorrect*, precisely analogous to the mathematical logic of computer language (57). This semiotics, as a formalising science, stems, then, from the realisation of the "death of the semantic" which, characterising the most advanced aesthetic, has marked the technological aspect of modern art, of which architecture was a significant component (58). And as a quantitative evaluation which ignores the signified, Bense's project requires that semiotics be only understood as programming and cycles. With the help of mathematics, this science of signs would, according to him, be able to extend its field of application to all the anthropological thematics: a project for the mathematisation of the world which represents the logical outcome of the utopia of the complete integration of social structures into a seamless web of communication channels. Since Bense believes that architecture is not structured in such a way as to produce signs in the linguistic sense of the word, what his theory offers is not a recipe for design; as a meta-method, it intervenes only as a precision instrument in the elaboration of particular theories.

b)- A semiotics which would like to serve theory, history, or the project but which has not been able to go beyond a description of architecture in terms of the Saussurian

opposition (signifier/signified), or those of Martinet (the double articulation of the sign) (59). By ignoring Bense's warning as to the different nature of signs in architecture, this tendency, which relies on a direct analogy between architecture and language, requires more attention because of the immediate use it makes of the linguistic sign in architectural discourses. So, how does one found a science which would assimilate two languages?

Firstly, there must be the assumption that an exact similarity of structure and function exists between environmental signs and linguistic signs. The main difficulty in substantiating this belief would be that of agreeing on the nature of the environmental signs and in composing an appropriate connection of them; a connection which would not simply coincide with a group of trivial descriptive terms. This somehow ambiguous proposition constitutes an untenable position: architecture is sign, as everything is; but this truth could not, in itself, justify the application of a method founded upon the linguistic sign - in its two components of a signifier and a signified - which has the character of abstraction. Before trying to apply the linguistic method to architecture, it is only wise that one should understand what this method really is, and whether it could lend itself to such applications. This is the message that Emilio Garroni, one of the most respected Italian

semiologists, was putting forward in his "*Progetto di semiotica*" which contains a detailed analysis of Hjelmslev's semiotics (60). By insisting on the formal character of language, Garroni questioned the relevance of applying scientific methods of research as those used in linguistics to other modes of expression such as architecture, cinema, and so forth. His main argument is that, in the latter type of communication systems, one of the factors essential to language, namely the double articulation of the sign, is missing. The same observation was made by G. Morpugo-Tagliabue when he wrote, as early as 1968, that:

"What the pretended architectural language lacks in order for it to be a language is precisely the primary factor of semiology: the heterogeneity between signifier and signified" (61).

And more than twenty years ago, G.B. Granger also rejected the possibility of identification of language and art, on the ground that the latter is in no way "...aimed at constructing discrete linear sequences carrying information" (62). This objection is even more valid, in my opinion, in the case of the physical environment: it is very difficult to see how to construct a repertory of formal elements which would carry a semic value and which would function in the same way as the classic units of linguistics. Besides, the syntax of natural languages is

powerless to model the syntactic relationships between the environmental signs which are, in any case, perceived in a very different manner from those of speech. I am referring, here, to the classic distinction, made by Lessing, between narrative and presentative modes of expression. In his "Lacoon" of 1776, Lessing differentiated between a poetic or narrative mode which, he says, is progressive in its manifestation - that is, its elements appear in sequence - and a visual or presentative mode, the elements of which are simultaneously juxtaposed in space (63).

In theory, it should be possible to construct codes of forms which are distinct and even classifiable in paradigmatic series, and which would take into account the necessity of discontinuity in the process of establishing meaning. If these formal characteristics are, then, linked to other characteristics such as function, economy, or ritual, they obviously would generate meaning in such a way as to allow the cultivated beholder, moving in an environment belonging to his own cultural heritage, to come close to grasping the original intentions that were at the origin of this particular environment. But this remains only a theoretically ideal construct (like a laboratory situation in which all the variables are strictly controlled); this ideal construct is subject to so many pre-conditions (i.e. that the code be known to and

shared by everybody; that the beholder acts only as receiver with no power of his own to induce meaning; that everybody acts, re-acts, and behaves in a similar manner,...) that it does not leave the realm of pure speculation.

Garroni's insistence upon the formal value of language allows him, instead, to speak of the form of the content and the form of the expression without having to take into account the material object - i.e. the referent. The removal of the problem of the referent leads him to the conclusion that the possibility of a formativity almost complete (which he calls "omni-formativity") is characteristic of, and relevant only in the case of linguistic systems, whereas the "non-omni-formativity" is characteristic of the non-linguistic systems (cinema, architecture,...). In other words, the correspondence between the form of the content and the form of the expression is unique in linguistic systems, whereas in non-linguistic systems, to one form of expression might correspond many forms of content, and vice-versa. This remark, in itself, would be enough to discredit any method which claims to be relevant to both systems. The notion of architectural sign is, itself, very ambiguous, because of the concrete character which transforms it into a material thing and renders it decomposable materially (and not only formally, as in the case of linguistic signs):

"The models that we can build", writes Garroni, "in architecture and which work in an effective way are not composed of material elements...but of homogeneous and formal elements, capable of interacting with elements of other different models" (64).

In the place of the material notion of the architectural sign, Garroni suggests the introduction of the formal notion of "invariants"; one would, then, be able to construct static typologies (columns,...) and dynamic ones (structures,...) in order to arrive at precise classifications which, while being able to indicate the level of innovation of an architectural experience, would not pretend to be exhaustive. What this means is that there can be no semiological system capable of telling everything about design; one would find, at one's disposal, integrable models which allow for the heterogeneity of artistic experience, and whose homogeneity would be constitutive of the system itself, and not of the experience of the various subjects. As to the non-correspondence of the syntactic relationships in language and architecture, Garroni suggested the establishment, within similar works of art, of a series of typological points of reference (i.e. invariants) for the purpose of clarifying the internal relationships between comparable elements without characterising the works of art as being fixed or codified invariants.

Therefore, while one cannot deny the fact that perceived forms do communicate information of some kind, it is clear that the wide variety of systems of expectations in a given group, or even at the level of the individual, renders the definition of a comprehensive code, universally applicable, impossible.

Very little is advanced by the claims about the similarity between linguistic and architectural processes. As a matter of fact, the analysis of these two systems points to a fundamental difference, rather than to a similarity. Although certain semiotic considerations might have some degree of relevance to design, the varied character of the environmental "messages" renders their decipherment very problematic. More importantly, in studies such as that of Garroni, there is an outright rejection of the possibility of semiotics as a universal key, capable of bridging the gap between the different modes of expression (a kind of pansemiosis). Why the many semiological models have chosen to disregard these facts is not very clear. What is clear, however, is that, in order for these applications to be formulated, it was necessary that the variety of the systems of expectations, mentioned earlier, is ignored. It was necessary to assume the unicity of interpretative models and behavioural patterns, the very assumption that Giddens and others rightly criticised for its reductionist connotations.

One of such applications is that of Norbert-Schultz who, by combining Morris' semiotics and Gestaltist models, tried to give a structure to perception and architectural phenomena, thus providing a link between one's own experience of the world and its reality outside one's consciousness (65). By adding some considerations regarding the symbolic dimension of architecture, Norbert-Schultz asserts that the good designer (!) would have to take all those aspects into consideration if the task of building is to be formulated correctly. As it stands, the work of the Norwegian architect corresponds to the highest ideals of social democracy: the total control over the environment. This is why he concluded that the present crisis in architecture and urban design is only the consequence of a default in "logic", and not, as one would have thought, the result of a historical knot of contradictions and struggles.

Umberto Eco, another imminent critical writer, starts by warning us against the notion of architectural code, saying that architecture can only speak of itself through the medium of codes which do not belong to it:

"The fact that one could interpret architecture on the basis of a geometrical code does not mean that architecture, as such, is founded upon a geometrical code" (66).

But Eco allowed himself to be lured into the analogy with the natural languages when he accepted the existence of the architectural sign as:

"...the presence of a signifier, the signified of which is the function that makes it possible" (67).

In order to account for the symbolic value of architectural forms, Eco introduces the notion of "secondary functions" which are destined to change, become old, and reappear in the course of history or according to fashion; thus the necessity of a historical interpretation, but one which is limited, in the case of Eco, to a history of uses, differing mentalities, and conceptions of space.

One could also mention the series of studies by "Group 107" which offer a model completely in line with that brand of semiological analysis based entirely on analogical thinking (68). The use that this group makes of Hjelmslev's model completely ignores the formal character attributed to language and which, as Garroni insisted, constitutes its most important feature. "Group 107" formulates a series of classifications and syntactic liaisons in accordance with a principle that says:

"The plan in architecture is a descriptive metalanguage of architecture" (69).

One would have thought that the plan is a method of

transcription (in which case, the analogy is with writing). As a result, this catalogue of studies strike one as being of use to neither the plan, nor to criticism, and even less to the history of architecture.

There is also the work of Philippe Boudon which, for one thing, is the perfect illustration of what should never be done with semiological concepts (70). His book *"Figuration graphique en architecture"* is a surrealist mixture of all the linguistic vocabulary from Saussure, Martinet, Jakobson, Morris, Hjelmslev, etc: sign, system, code, referent, metaphor, metonymy, they are all there (71). Through a series of analogies, Boudon allows the text to be blurred by all kinds of delirium, the last of which makes him spot , with a large amount of sketches and drawings, something quite extraordinary: the recurrence of curves and right angles (LC) in the works of Le Corbusier, the presence of N-shaped ribs in those of Nervi, and the two "As" in Alvar Aalto's projects. Foreseeing the sceptical reactions of the readers, and the objection that no rationally minded person would take this seriously, Boudon says:

"One shall have to find an explanation for the ability of the mind to produce resemblance, to make things resemble each other by an intentionality which is similar to the imaging consciousness as defined by Sartre" (72).

The indifference shown by these models towards a precise

understanding of linguistic concepts led to a tragic confusion between signification and communication. While signification indicates the nature of the sign, and, as such, leads only to consideration of a semantic nature, communication measures and codifies the use and effects of signs. By dealing with both concepts at the same time, the semiological models in architecture fail to understand the basic problem of the real effects of signs on the public. These effects vary considerably from one group to another, depending on the system of expectations of each group; a system which is conditioned by specific beliefs, a specific place in the structure of power which involves certain interests that are not shared by the whole community, and also by the intentional element involved in all human action (73). As Renato de fusco noted, by ignoring these specifications, the semiological model could only provide an analysis which stresses the universal without a mention about the differences (74).

If it is the case that, for the construction of scientific theories, logico-mathematical abstractions are necessary, in the case of design criticism and theory, conceptual abstractions serve only to confuse the structures of language with those of behaviour which are in no way similar. The most important lesson drawn from these experiments is that for a semiology which wants to do away with irrelevant questions, it is essential to realise that

the universe of words is different from that of things. It is the world of signs which symbolises and formalises, not that of the physical objects (75).

One final model of semiological analysis which remains to be mentioned is that which addresses semiotics as an instrument for ideological criticism. The idea of Gandolsonas and Agrest was to establish a theory of design free from all ideological coloration, which, they believe, only semiotics can do (76). One must get rid, they say, of all the traditional conceptions of the signifier, and develop a theory which:

"...must be carried out through a theoretical work which cannot be realised from within ideology, but from an outside free from it and in struggle with it" (77).

The notion of ideological criticism using semiotics would be extremely attractive but for the unfortunate opposition that both writers posit between ideology and theory:

"A theory which is at odds with ideology is necessarily non-ideological, and, thereby, non-integrated" (78).

The assertion that theory can be opposed to ideology, that objective truth stands against false consciousness, is itself an ideological one. The very idea of a knowledge free from ideology, of an advanced theory of design erected to resist ideological attacks, is the result of a whole series of misunderstandings. It is important to

realise certain basic facts:

a)- Ideology does not identify itself exclusively with conservative attitudes; it can easily be translated, either in very advanced theories (like Bense's theory of the total integration of the world), or in regressive attitudes (like the will to return to an "Arcadian" past).

b)- Ideological criticism is cruel and can offer no hope for an alternative. In the same way as one cannot talk about a class-political economy but only of a class criticism of political economy, what can be conceived of is not an ideologically-free theory, but only an ideological criticism of theory.

c)- The historical struggle is not a struggle between ideology and science, but a struggle between alternative strategies which are all ideologically inspired.

What is more, in order to formulate a semiotics for design, Gandolsonas and Agrest had to refer to the most ambiguous Saussurian concept of all, that of the "arbitrary". With Saussure, the term was used to indicate that language, as a purely formal system, does not refer to any specific reality; it is in this sense that he spoke of the arbitrary nature of language. But within the formal system that language is, everything is necessary, especially the relationship between the two components of the sign (i.e. the signifier and the signified).

Gandolsonas and Agrest, by misunderstanding the concept of the "arbitrary", assumed that it refers to the two parts of the sign and used it to denounce the relationship between form and function which, they say, is not natural, but arbitrary. While it is true that this relationship between form and function is a completely arbitrary one, this is not because, in language, signifier and signified are linked in an arbitrary manner. This is due to the difference between the omni-formativity of natural languages that Garroni spoke of (where signifier and signified are linked by a necessary and unique relationship), and the non-omni-formativity of the non-linguistic systems, such as architecture, in which a specific form of content corresponds to many possible forms of expressions (79).

So, how can we assess the contribution of the various semiological experiments in architecture? To what extent have they helped to reveal the ideological structure of design discourses?

To temper the brutal elements of existence, to absorb the heterogeneous, to give meaning to the senseless, to rationalise the incongruous, in short, to translate the "Other" into the language of the "Same": these are the principal functions of myth and ideology that semiological criticism claimed to be able to reveal. Semiology set out to pave the way for a critical study of the dominant

discourse in the West; a study which would disinter the conflicts which lie beneath the soothing solutions and the rational postures by which everything is meaningful. Shared languages, forms, universalising principles, unanimous communities are all falsehoods: this is the working hypothesis which semiological criticism gave itself.

By revealing the heterogeneity of the signified and lived experience, semiology was trying to make a political point: it was trying to demonstrate that the hold of institutions over individuals can be traced back to the ascendancy of language in life; therefore, semiology set out to follow the advice given by Mallarme when he suggested that to disturb language in its plenitude and to disturb signifying forms would amount to subverting the community (80). This is why some people committed to social changes, like Gandolsonas and Agrest, embarked on a study of architecture and the city in terms of an analysis which uses linguistic criticism as a weapon against what they perceived as an essentially oppressive system. Semiological analysis was, for them, the key for understanding the functioning of ideology in the manipulation of the environment and the perpetuation of the domination of the institutional forms of thinking over the individual. But if semiology may be able to turn the laws behind the

production of images back on themselves, the shedding of light over their implications must be the task of another method of dissection. This is why, in the words of Julia Kristeva, semiological research remains:

"...a discipline which finds nothing at the bottom of research (no key to no mystery) but its own ideological gesture, so that it may take cognizance of it, negate its own effort, and start all over again. By positing a precise knowledge as its final goal, at the end of its journey, it arrives at a theory which, being itself a signifying system, sends the semiotic system back to its starting point: back, that is, to the model of semiology itself so that it can be criticised and overtured once again" (81).

The reference of this diffused tendency to experiment with languages can be found in the heroic years of the modern movement. But contemporary ways of manipulating linguistic materials tell us that "the war has ended": the languages used in the 1920's and 1930's were, in this sense, "languages of combat", fighting weapons; as it always happens, with contemporary architecture, these "combat languages" are transformed into "languages of pleasure" (82), into playful manipulations of images which try to distance themselves further and further from the soiling reality of struggle. As such, semiology, despite its complex relationship with the structural method, is,

today, an ideology; more exactly, an ideology of communication (83). The single and collective universe of development must, for semiology, be bound together by a band of communications capable of repairing any eventual break, of settling every strife, and of rendering productive contradiction itself.

From this follows the categorical refusal of analyses couched in terms of the symbolic field or the domain of signifying structures, and the recourse, instead, to analyses in terms of the genealogy of the relations of force, strategic developments, and local tactics. One's point of reference should not, in my opinion, be the great model of language and signs, but that of wars and battles. The history which bears us and determines us has more common features with the form of war than with that of language: relations of power and not relations of meaning (84). History has no "meaning", though this is not to say that it is absurd or totally incoherent; on the contrary, it is intelligible down to its smallest details, but this, in accordance with the intelligibility of struggles, strategies and tactics. Semiotics, as the structure of communication, cannot account for the intelligibility of conflicts, and semiological research is but a way of avoiding the violent character of reality by reducing it and presenting it in the calm and platonic form of language and dialogue.

What can one conclude from the theoretical experiments based on the empiricist alternative (85), and what meaning can one attribute to the studies on perception, sensorial mechanisms, and, more generally, on the articulation common to things and the organism?

Either in the form of the ideology of "needs", or that of "communication", by transforming history into nature, these studies act as myths. It is Barthes who first spoke of myths as being against history:

"Myths carry on their mystifications by hiding the artificial, i.e. history, behind a fake naturalism" (86).

Myth has the task of giving historical intention a natural justification, of making what is contingent appear natural and eternal. While the world enters language as a dialectical relationship between social actions and conflicts, it comes out of myth as a harmonious display of essences. In the process, a conjuring trick has taken place: it has turned reality inside out; it has emptied it of historical determination and filled it with nature. Myth does not deny things; on the contrary, its function is to talk about them. The problem is with the way in which it does so: it purifies them; it makes them look innocent; it gives them a natural and eternal justification; it provides them with a clarity which is not that of an explanation, but that of a statement of

fact, removing, thereby, any doubt as to their reality. In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human actions; it gives them the simplicity of essence; it does away with any going back beyond that which is immediately visible; it organises a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident; it establishes a blissful clarity by which things appear to men as something by themselves. As such, myth performs on the object an operation which deprives it of all history; in it, history disappears; through it, all that is left for men to do is to enjoy this beautiful object without asking where it might have come from. Nothing is produced, nothing is chosen, all is naturally given. All that one can do is to possess these objects from which all the soiling traces of origin or choice have been removed. This miraculous evaporation of history corresponds to one concept common to all bourgeois myths: the "irresponsibility" of man.

As myths, empiricist discourses in architecture serve, therefore, to deviate attention from the conflicts involved in the production of the environment, and speak of the latter not as the outcome of a painful process of production, but as an entity that is already there, a finished thing. Architectural discourse reduces this complex phenomenon to a homogeneous field in which there

is no time (except in purely descriptive or apologetic histories of architectural and urban formations), and no contradictions; this obvious givenness is expressed in trans-historical or a-historical terms, i.e. users, community, environment, meaning, cosmos, etc... And it is only the autonomy of critical language and its clear independence from theory and design which can allow architecture to be re-historicised by unearthing the conflicts that it tries so hard to hide. Only critical language can reveal why even the analyses which try vigorously to plan a systematic and objective reading of the world are so easily turned into fashions and myths.

4. HISTORY AND DESIGN

"Of course we need history, but our need for it is different from that of the refined idler in the garden of knowledge, even if he looks down his nose at our hard and awkward circumstances and necessities. We need it, that is, for life and action...Only insofar as history serves life, are we willing to serve history" (87).

If the empiricist alternative has, as I tried to demonstrate, ended up by turning architectural discourses into myths, the second alternative, that which thinks of knowledge as historically determined, aimed at introducing the possibility of qualifying the relationships between history and design. This theme is by no means new: throughout the nineteenth century, the discipline of architecture constantly ran up against the problem of "historical awareness". What is new is the impetus given to historical analysis by the guilt complex which post-war architects inherited and nurtured after the condemnation of the modern movement.

As with the empirically-founded experiments, the modern movement was found guilty of destroying the quality of architecture and, thereby, the quality of life. But while the empiricist rhetoric was directed against the "inhumane" production of modern architects and against

their "failure" to respond to the perceptual needs and communal aspirations of man, in the case of the historicist alternative, the rhetoric was against the "anti-historicism" of the avant-gardes and their renewed attempts to break all ties with the past. From there, critics tried to salvage the concept of historicity and re-insert it within design products. Therefore, the first thing to be done, here, is to examine what historicism means and whether the modern movement can be accused of anti-historicism.

Historicism was, since the 1950's, been somewhat uneasily associated with a kind of historical determinism, on the one hand, and with a kind of relativistic eclecticism, on the other. While Karl Popper saw it as a sort of teleological theory of history which had, for him, totalitarian implications (88), Nicolas Pevsner was warning us against a return to the kind of eclecticism as practiced in the nineteenth century (89). Popper was, of course, referring to those idealising schemes of historical development which, following the tradition of Hegelian philosophy, saw history as the implacable instrument of human destiny. This historicism represented, for Popper, an inherent poverty, an operation which can only result in the flattening of the pluralistic nature of human existence. These two negative interpretations of historicism both refer to the sense of the word as it

first emerged in the vocabulary and which had in itself strongly negative connotations.

However, as understood in the 1920's and 1930's, historicism constituted the very essence of modernity and not the opposite, as often suggested. Opposed to the natural laws of the Renaissance and to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, modernist historicism held that the characteristics of each historical event were unique and peculiar to it, that they ought to be understood not by means of a preconceived system of thought, but solely through the standards of their own peculiar time. Rather than searching for a universal causation of all the natural and human phenomena, modernist historicism stressed the importance of the interpretation of historical events on their own terms; style, language, forms, customs and laws are all, in each period and place, bound to each other as symptoms of a character unique to that period. We are, therefore, a long way from the restricted sense that Pevsner and Popper gave to the word. The assumption that each age possessed its own style made possible the assimilation of each style to the values and ethical standards which are said to be characteristic of a particular age. Each style became, in a way, the emblem of its society, a true and faithful reflection of the morality, ethos and historical meaning of events of that period. By declaring its rejection of all the classical

styles and academist traditions, the modern movement wanted to forge a new language consistent with what it identified as the demands of a new epoch. The recognition of a specifically modern "Zeitgeist" was, in this sense, an essentially historicist act. From this came the methods of the first historians of modern architecture, as they searched for the origins of ideas and forms and as they tried to follow the development and culmination in a phase of history which was itself called a movement (90).

The anti-historicist label put on the modern movement was, therefore, not the result of a critical appraisal of its products and philosophy; it was, rather, an a-posteriori justification for the eclectic experiments of the last twenty years which were, then, rationalised and inscribed within a theoretical perspective which assumes the "anti-historicism" of the avant-gardes.

The re-affirmation of historical awareness in design took three distinct forms:

a)- Firstly, we have a model which calls upon history to smooth the way for issues whose outcome is preordained. This is a model which conceives of history as a value to be offered to the present; a reassuring quality is attributed to history, seen as a smooth and linear continuity which governs all events from the affirmation of the Enlightenment philosophy to our present day. In

revolt against the very sources of modern art, the advocates of this tendency:

"...put the masters of the historical avant-gardes in the dock; the new tasks are those left unresolved by the roaring twenties; the anti-historicism of the modern movement is seen as being contingent and surmountable and what is put forward is the hypothesis of a history as a guide for a new kind of experience" (91).

The relationship between design and history is now thought to be best expressed at the level of the metropolis. The dialectic between historical centres and new developments is posited at the core of the problem of the recovery of history. The rejection of the "Charter of Athens" (92) made possible the elaboration of a doctrine for the conservation and redevelopment of the historical centres, inspired by a kind of romantic anti-capitalist philosophy. Along this line, one could mention Leonardo Benevolo's interpretation of urban history as a vital necessity for European culture (93). One could also mention the work of people like the Krier brothers, Maurice Culot and Bernard Huet (94) who, disenchanted with the consumed effects of modern utopias, dream of a bonded pre-industrial state in images of a city inhabited by its builders. Against the dissolution of the single architectural object in the indiscriminate landscape of the modern metropolis and its replacement by the more generic concept of the

"environment", these analyses offer the recovery of the specific meaning of the town place. This is an architecture that does not want to be consumed, that wants to prevent the absent-minded perception characteristic of the modern metropolis (95) and that proposes to reveal the symbolic and historical meaning of urban spaces.

b)- Secondly, one is presented with a model which rejects the possibility of history as a value to be offered to the present and which conceives of it only as an event. This model, which renounces to consider history as a source of prospects and values, does not reject it altogether but simply tries to find its right place in the thematic of the environment by widening the issue to the evolution of urban forms. As Gregotti put it:

"This task in which history and planning merge could be defined as the search for the essence of architecture. A search that does not lead to the discovery of the objects in themselves, but to the realisation that they are changing in a certain direction. In a way, one can consider such an essence by conceiving of history itself as the project" (96).

Gregotti's work is the expression of a culture that has turned towards the past without a clear idea of how to use it. This agonising and inescapable condition is made explicit when he stated:

"We clash with the problem of history and we immediately say that one ought to be careful and wary of the illusion that it might provide us with the elements for deducing the forms of architecture, that it might show us some safety rules before we carry out our first move. Any real advancement is always discontinuous and disarticulated" (97),

and a little further down:

"...history, then, presents itself as a curious instrument whose knowledge seems indispensable, but that once acquired, cannot be used; a sort of passage that one has to walk through but which teaches nothing about the art of walking" (98).

This historical criticism leads to the somewhat paradoxical situation in which the only way forward consists in perpetually putting in crisis, exposing and repudiating any attempt made to provide a method or a precise process by which to read history. The same paradox is stated by Guiseppe Samona in his analysis of the theme of rupture and continuity in the urban structure, a theme central to the preoccupations of the ongoing debate on architectural issues:

"...the reasons that would, in the name of historical coherence, take away every discrimination between traditional and potential environments, in order to consider operative one environment in which man lives,

appear to us rather schematic; in the same way appear dangerous the opposite reasons that try to historicise the utopias of the ancient environment, presenting it as a need to be satisfied after the defeat of the rationalist utopia" (99).

In this second model, the acute awareness of history seems always mediated by a kind of metaphysical detachment from it. The rejection of the myth of the city as organism and the acceptance of its dynamics resulted in a conception of it as the repository of a fragmented collective memory continually re-interpreted and enriched by new interventions conditioned by the particular experience of each subject.

One expression of this conception is found in the studies which rely on the notion of "typology" and its relationship with the urban morphology (100). These two variables (typology and morphology) are not chosen as a condition of abstract necessity but, rather, in order to map out the conceptual area of possible confrontation from which different sets of data can be fed in the course of time. Instead of the empty intentions to change, in one single sweep of replanning, the entire urban structure, the typological studies share a temporary suspension of judgments about the city in its global character, in favor of concentrating on limited sectors of the environment which are considered to be the most strategic aspects of

the urban structure. The intervention on these strategic sectors would result, according to these studies, in a profound modification of the entire urban structure.

c)- Finally, there is the purely eclectic use of history which, while being the least interesting in terms of its theoretical value, has nevertheless been the one which attracted the most attention by its enormous success (in terms of realised projects) and its rapide expansion throughout the world. This light-hearted re-introduction of history, after the initial phase of technological ideology, has been extremely damaging, as far as the interpretation of the modern movement was concerned. The backward leap that this model performed towards the revival of historically based images, quotations from historical styles and assimilations of contextual incidents in literal ways has been the target of recurrent denunciations from critics who demonstrated a subtler attitude towards vis-a-vis history:

"The architects", writes Levi, "glutted with technology and rational objectivism have turned again to tradition, have mumbled about pre-existing environments, have modelled their buildings on ancient prototypes, but with disarming superficiality. From all this derives the present confusion that mixes together Neo-Liberty's so-called spontaneous buildings, superficial attempts at new environments and even badly modernised revivals. This is

the price paid by the middle generation for having embraced without discussion the anti-historicist ideology of the masters and, then, for having suddenly dropped it without any further elaboration" (101).

If one cannot but agree with most aspects of the criticism against the "naive" use of history as that shown by groups such as Neo-Liberty (102) or the eclectic school, in general, one must add, at the same time, that this criticism does not account for the clear symptoms of distress implicit in these attempts. An outright rejection of eclecticism does not pay tribute to the positive contribution that it made as a symptom of the urgency of the newly but not clearly defined problems yet.

As the eclectic use of history spread all over the world, what was a sign of distress became the new programme of the architecture of the post-industrial era. As the direct emulation of classical and gothic motifs gradually covered the bare surface of modernism and as "Collage City", the spatial translation of Popper's pluralism (103), replaced "Radiant City" (104), it became clear to everyone that the premises upon which the eclectic manipulation of the past is based are not any more soundly formulated than those of modernism. On the contrary, they rely on the very fiction formulated by the historians of modernism that the latter has somehow succeeded in breaking out with the past; eclecticism requires the myth so dear to the avant-gardes

that a rupture, a discreet shift has been effected between the old eclectic world of the nineteenth century and the brave new one. Accordingly, the eclectic use of history sets out to heal this mythical break, to overcome that nebulous rupture; in search for ever-renewable images, it turns to the history of architecture, to its "rich" tradition of meanings and forms.

While the myth of the modern movement is being sustained by the very fact that it is challenged, the ideology of eclecticism is no longer served by the same theory of history, that history which once gave meaning to eclectic and modernist alike. The historical city and its historical architecture are still referred to, but without the coherent framework of ideology that endowed styles with overtones of particular politics and morality, in the nineteenth century, or which gave sense to the modernist project. Instead, the dressing of the contemporary metropolis in clothes borrowed from the past conceals the naive misunderstanding involved in bestowing values that transcend history onto the academic reconstructions of stylistic codes. This implies a weakening of the present insofar as it falls into that excess which Nietzsche defines as "the antiquarian veneration of the past" (105), seen as an inventory of forms, as a sacred museum of available archetypes.

Following the contradictory experiments of the welfare

state housing programmes, on the one hand, and the phantasmagoria of a make-believe "high-tech" culture, it became clear that what, in the twenties, appeared as a global project of democratisation has shrunk to the calculated strategies of creating circuses of "bread and spectacles". This socio-economic strategy was parodied in the conspicuous consumption of culture which shapes contemporary eclecticism. As a matter of fact, this strategy was repeatedly being naturalised under the moralising pretext of a democratic pluralism. The lack of common conviction and the ethos of indiscriminate toleration are mistaken for democratic freedom and elevated to the status of moral values.

What is more or less offered as the programme is "ambiguity"; experimentation is understood as the research into odd and unusual connections, a research into abnormality. Starting from the quest of the "lost aura" of the work of art, it has grown into the exemplar of industrial "Kitsch".

Without any substantial meaning other than the cult of irony and the illusion of a make-believe culture, eclecticism is a production without discourse; it is simply a production of quotations, parentheses and brackets; a kind of disjointed and insidious whisper that spells "advertisement". Although it may achieve momentary titillation and, in some cases, a stylish irony, this mode

5. THE BURDEN OF AUTHORITY

is by nature fragmentary and, as such, it probably contributes to a world that is still rootless and alienating.

5. THE BURDEN OF ANTHROPOLOGISM

The emergence of man within the space of knowledge resulted, therefore, in the division of European thought into two distinct but complementary bodies of research: on the one hand, the empiricist who focuses on the space of the body and on finding a universal measure with which to interpret, know and transform the world; on the other hand, there are those who try to historicise their work by inscribing it within a historical continuum. As far as architectural discourses are concerned, these two lines of research share the same objectives: they both attempt to "desalienate habitable space", thus the emergence of a discourse which falls into moralistic and totally unproductive judgments about the alienated condition of man under the oppressive weight of technological culture and of the modern metropolis.

But does not such a "desalienated space" exist only poetically as in dreams, or as Heidegger warned us (106), it must be transformed into an attitude of disenchanted expectation? Is it not precisely this attitude that he described when he talked about the conditions of a mode of living that is impossible today, a mode which combines dwelling, building and thinking? There is a lot to be learnt from the choice made by the most sensitive European intellectuals: he who keeps investigating, without

prejudice, the new means of reception and communication brought about by the new technological civilisation, rather than endlessly spreading tears over the alienation of man caused by the technological culture, is already starting the rescue of man.

What rendered the dominant currents in design theory totally ineffectual is their constant refusal to consider the polyvalent nature of the urban phenomenon and their persistent efforts to read the same phenomenon in the light of a single linguistic key (be it political, economic, cultural, or semiological). As the product of the cumulated effects of the interaction of opposing practices, as the battlefield for divergent strategies, only when interpreted as such does the modern metropolis reveal its own separate and unique phenomenological character; a character which cannot be reduced by artificial means (i.e. myths) to the level of a mere formal description. Hence the necessity for specific and varied techniques of analysis in order to define the precise role of the architectural practice and the multiple factors which conditions its production. Only by doing so would one be able to recover the very same structure into a unity and organicity, qualities sought after by all quarters.

Such an undertaking, for it to have any chance of achieving results, requires the re-insertion of all the

past utopias into the present reality; it requires the unfolding of the historical conditions which brought their being in the first place. At the same time, it requires the unfolding of the historical meaning of the different proposals which have become part of the modern urban scene. This kind of reading would help to bring into light the original functions and ideologies which define and delimit, in the course of time, the role and meaning of the architectural practice, understood as:

"A discipline historically conditioned and institutionally functional to, first the pre-capitalist merchant bourgeoisie and, later, to the new perspectives of capitalist civilisation" (107).

One should also keep in mind the warning expressed by Marx in his analysis of the German ideology:

"We must pay attention to this history, since the role of ideology boils down to either an erroneous conception of this history, or a complete abstraction from it" (108).

A history not as a great reservoir of codified values, but as a heteroclit collections of utopias, failures and betrayals. This is the history which remains to be written; a history as a "design of crisis". There is no absolute guarantee of validity in such a design; one must learn, once and for all, not to ask history for pacifications. This means that the emphasis must be on the specific relationships which, in the course of time, come

to establish themselves between concrete labour and abstract labour. As such, the architectural production must be read on the basis of historiographical parameters relating to both intellectual work and the development of the modes and relations of production. Seen in this way, the architectural production will always be the result of an unresolved dialectic; the interrelationship between intellectual foresight, modes of production and modes of consumption ought to make the apparent synthesis of any given work explode. It is precisely where this synthesis is presented as a finished whole (where ideology is most successful) that it is most necessary to expose the disunity, fragmentation and dissemination of the work's internal unities. From these disintegrated elements, it will, then, be necessary to proceed to a separate analysis: consumer relations, symbolic horizons, avant-gardes' hypotheses, linguistic structures, methods of restructuring production, advances in new technologies - all should, then, present themselves stripped of the ambiguity ingrained in the synthesis originally demonstrated by the work.

It is clear that no single methodology, when applied to separate components, will be able to account for the totality of the work in all its different aspects. Instead, separate fields such as iconology, political economy, the history of thought, of religion, of science

and of popular tradition, all of them will be able to make use of the individual fragments once, and only once, they have been historicised. The final historicisation of the multiple non-linguistic components of a work will have, in this way, two distinct results: firstly, that of breaking the magical circle of language by obliging it to reveal the foundations upon which it rests; secondly that of permitting the recovery of the function of language itself.

To study a language and the manner in which it acts means, first and foremost, to examine its incidence in all the extra-linguistic spheres touched upon by the dissemination of the work. This is the only way in which one can talk about architectural language. In the analysis of artistic languages, attention must be diverted from the area of immediate communication and directed towards that of the underlying meanings. In other words, it is necessary to measure the productivity of linguistic innovations and to subject the domain of symbolic forms to an analysis capable of calling into question, at all time, the historical legitimacy of the Western division of labour.

The need for such a revamping of the criteria to be used in analysis calls, however, for a price to be paid: it calls for the removal of all residue of anthropologism. The anthropological configuration of modern thought consists principally in the division of dogmatism into two

different levels, each lending support to the other and fixing its limits, at the same time: the pre-critical analysis of what man is, in his essence, becomes the analytic of everything that can be presented to man's experience. To ask the question of whether man really exists (in the epistemological sense, of course) and to imagine, for a brief moment, what the world and thought would be, if he did not exist, is universally condemned as a heretical exercise and a mere indulgence in paradox. But this is to forget, quite conveniently, that there was a time, not so long ago, when the world, its order and human beings existed, but man did not (109). We do know, in any case, that all the efforts at thinking afresh are directed at destroying the very foundations of anthropologism which has dominated our ways of comprehending the world for the last two centuries. Perhaps one should see the first attempts at the uprooting of the anthropological supremacy over thought - to which, no doubt, contemporary philosophy is dedicated - in the Nietzschean experience; it becomes easier to understand why Nietzsche's thought have had for us such a disturbing power from the moment it introduced, in the form of an imminent event:

"The promise-threat, the notion that man would be no more but would be replaced by the superman" (110).

By means of a philological criticism, Nietzsche rediscovered the point at which Man and God belong to one

another; he rediscovered the point at which the death of the latter corresponds to the disappearance of the former and, finally, the point at which the promise of the superman signifies the imminence of the death of man:

"It is no longer possible to think, in our days, other than in the void left by the disappearance of man. For, this void does not create a deficiency; it does not constitute a lacuna that must be filled. It is nothing more and nothing less than the unfolding of a space in which it is, once more, possible to think. Anthropology constitutes, perhaps, the fundamental arrangement that has governed and controlled the path of philosophical thought since Kant. This arrangement is essential, since it is part of our history. But it is disintegrating before our eyes, since we are beginning to recognise and denounce in it, in a critical mode, both a forgetfulness of the opening that made it possible and a stubborn obstacle standing obstinately in the way of an imminent form of thought" (111).

But while the reality of this imminent event is increasingly felt and expressed in analysis, we remain, for our part (that is, in architectural discourse), still deeply entrenched in humanistic thought. If it is true that the application of structural methods to architecture has opened a breach in the supremacy of man and has helped architects to start considering the possibility that he

might not be at the centre of creation or at the summit and culmination of life, there still remains, in the structure of architectural discourses, an overwhelming tendency to think of design only in relation to man.

Perhaps the task facing criticism in architecture is becoming a little clearer. A daunting and time-consuming task of destruction; a negative task which consists in eliminating all traces of humanistic anthropology; a task of disturbing the tranquility of accepted unities and concepts which are never reflected upon; a task of removing the piles of stones that have accumulated before us. It is useless to lament a *fait accompli*: ideology has become reality, even if the romantic dream of the intellectuals who sought to guide the productive universe has logically remained within the superstructural sphere of utopia. It seems appropriate, at this stage, to remember that:

"...Undichterisch Wohnt Der Mensch".

NOTES

1. THE APPARITION OF MAN IN THE SPACE OF KNOWLEDGE

- (1) The sentence was taken from V. de Feo's interesting essay on the phenomenon of architectural competitions, "*A propos des competitions*", published in *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* N.185 (1975), pp.57-62.
- (2) M. Foucault, "*Histoire des systemes de pensee. Resumes des cours*", *Annales du College de France* (Paris, 1972-73), p127.
- (3) On the work of the "Frankfurt School", see M. Serres, "*La communication*", Editions Minuit (Paris, 1968).
- (4) T. Adorno, "*Letter to Walter Benjamin*", published in "*Aesthetics and Politics*", edited by R. Taylor (London, 1977), p.118.
- (5) These various authors are referred to at various stages of this study. See also the bibliography at the end of the document.
- (6) See C. Alexander, "*Notes on the synthesis of form*", Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1966); also by the same author, "*The timeless way of building*", Oxford University Press (New York, 1979). See also L.

Halprin, "Notebooks, 1959-1971", M.I.T. Press (London, 1971) and also "The RSVP cycles; creative processes in the human environment", Braziller Publications (New York, 1969).

(7) See A. Rossi, "L'architettura della città", Edizioni Marsilio (Padua, 1973). On the work of Grassi, see the article "La Tendenza" in *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* N.190 (1977), pp47-70 and, in the same magazine, G. Grassi, "La question du réalisme", pp81-87.

(8) Refer to chapter "The unpoetical dwelling of man".

(9) This configuration of knowledge is the subject analysed by M. Foucault in his book "The order of things: an archaeology of the human sciences", Tavistock Publications (London, 1970).

(10) The state of knowledge before the apparition of man is what Foucault called the "Classical Episteme". However, Foucault abandoned, soon after, this concept of episteme, as the general organising principle of all human knowledge, because of its restrictive and inhibiting effects. Nevertheless, as far as the articulations of intellectual activities are concerned, it remains an extremely relevant concept, especially in relation to the formation of discourses in architecture. One further specification: man, here, does not refer to human beings, but only to the concept

of man as an epistemological subject.

(11) About these two alternatives, go back to p.38.

2. EMPIRICISM AND DESIGN

(12) Here, the conception of humanism or its rejection by a theoretical anti-humanism should not be confused with a concern or a lack of concern with human beings or society. The term humanism is used only in reference to a certain perspective based on the abstract notion of the subject, i.e. man.

(13) F. Engels, *"Louis Feuerbach et la fin de l'ideologie classique allemande"*, Editions Maspero (Paris, 1967), p51.

(14) See L. Althusser, *"For Marx"*, New Left Books (London, 1977), especially chapter one.

(15) J. Derrida, *"L'écriture et la différence"*, Editions Seuil (Paris, 1967), p224.

(16) It is these aspects which must be reconstituted by critical analysis in its project of de-mythification, the steps of which are described in p9 of this study.

(17) See M. Vitruvius Pollio, *"The ten books on architecture"*, translated by M.H. Morgan, Dover Publications (New York, 1960), chapters one and two.

- (18) Abbe Morelly, *"Essai sur l'esprit humain ou principes naturels de l'éducation"* (Paris, 1743), reimpression by Minkoff Publications (Geneva, 1970), p43. See also M.A. Laugier, *"Observations sur l'architecture"* (La Haye, 1755), reimpression by Minkoff Publications (Geneva, 1972).
- (19) Go back to p36.
- (20) The hypothesis that urbanism and the territorial reorganisation were progressively born as a result of the will or, rather, the necessity to integrate those living outside the accepted norms of social behaviour was investigated by Allal, Buffard, Marie and Regazzola in *"La fonction-miroir"*, published in *"Situations migratoires"*, Editions Galilee (Paris, 1977), pp38-71.
- (21) J. Lacan, *"Ecrits I"*, Editions Seuil (Paris, 1966), p457.
- (22) See F. Choay, *"L'urbanisme, utopie et realite"*, Editions Seuil (Paris, 1965).
- (23) G. Deleuze & P. Gattari, *"The anti-Oedipus"*, Editions Viking (New York, 1977).
- (24) In this instance, the birth of the primary school is a good illustration of the shift in the institutional meaning of primary education. See A.

Querrien, *"Genealogie des equipements collectifs. Les equipements de normalisation"*, published in *Recherches* N.23 (1976), pp12-28.

(25) M. Foucault, *"Discipline and punish. The birth of the prison"*, Peregrine Books (Hammondsworth, 1979), p194.

(26) P. Francastel, *"Art et technique"*, Editions Minuit (Paris, 1956), p38.

(27) See, for example, L. Murard & P. Zylberman, *"Le petit travailleur infatigable"*, published in *Recherches* N.25 (1976), pp6-15; see also M. Foucault, *"La volonte de savoir"*, Editions Gallimard (Paris, 1976).

(28) A. Maslow & N.L. Mintz, *"Effects of aesthetic surroundings I: initial effects of three aesthetic surroundings upon perceiving energy and well-being in faces"*, published in *Journal of psychology* N.41 (1956), pp247-254.

(29) Mechanistic and metaphysical materialism see the relationship between the subject and object in terms of the action of the object on the subject. The latter is regarded as passive and receptive: "the subject was understood to be an individual whose substance was seen only in his natural origin. The subject remained passive, not only in the sphere of cognition, but also

in practical activity", M. Rosenthal & P. Yudin, "A dictionary of philosophy", Moscow Press (1967), p474. The similarity with Anglo-saxon empiricism is striking: "He [the subject] is a passive organism in which associations are formed by the interplay of processes...assuring successful adaptation to the environment", J.A. Gray, "Attention, consciousness and voluntary control of the behaviour", Pergamon Press (Oxford, 1966), p41.

(30) See O. Newman, "CIAM group for the research of social and visual interrelationships. Oscar Newman by order of Jacob B. Bakema, for the Otterloo 1959 participants", Edited by J. Joedicke, Tiranti (London, 1961).

(31) A. Rapoport, "House, form and culture", Prentice-Hall Inc. (Inglewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969) and also by the same author, "The meaning of the built environment", Sage Publications (London, 1982).

(32) L. Mumford, "Arts and techniques", Columbia University Press (1952), p37; see also L. Mumford, "Technique and the nature of man", published in "Knowledge among men", Edited by S.D. Rypley, Columbia University Press (1966), pp76-103.

(33) D. Redfield, "The primitive world and its transformations", Penguin Books (1972) and V.G. Childe,

"What happened in history", Penguin Books (1971).

(34) K. Lynch & L. Rodwin, "A theory of urban form", published in "Environmental psychology", Edited by H.M. Prohansky, W.H. Ittelson and L.G. Rivlin (New York, 1970), p94.

(35) K. Lynch, "A theory of good city form", MIT Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), p49.

(36) K. Lynch & L. Rodwin, "A theory of urban form", op. cit., p95.

(37) C. Sitte, "L'art de bâtir les villes. L'urbanisme selon ses fondements artistiques", Editions D. Vincent & l'Equerre (Paris, 1980). See also D. Wieczorek, "Camillo Sitte ou les debuts de l'urbanisme moderne", Collection Architecture + Recherches, Dessart & Mardaga (Bruxelles, 1981).

(38) F. Furet, "Structuralisme et l'intelligentsia française", published in *Temps Presente* N.7 (1967), p14.

(39) P. Anderson, "In the tracks of historical materialism", Verso Publications (London, 1983), p54.

(40) Some of the authors who have tackled this question are P. Abrams, "Historical sociology", Cornell University Press (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982); E.P. Thompson,

"*The poverty of theory*", Merlin Press (London, 1978);
C. Tilly, "*As sociology meets theory*", Academy press
(New York, 1981).

(41) A. Giddens, "*Central problems in social theory*",
Macmillan (London, 1979); also by the same author, "*A
contemporary critique of historical materialism*",
Macmillan (London, 1981) and "*The constitution of
society*", University of California Press (Berkeley, CA,
1984).

(42) A. Giddens, "*Central problems in social theory*",
op. cit., p58.

(43) For instance, as that given by Nicolas Bourbaki,
the collective pseudonym of a group of French
mathematicians who have been working, since 1939, on a
definite survey of mathematics.

(44) M. Serres, "*La communication*", Editions Minuit
(Paris 1968), p32.

(45) J. Lacan, "*Ecrits I*", Editions Seuil (Paris, 1966),
pp685-695.

3. LANGUAGE AND DESIGN

(46) See, for example, B. Zevi's essay, "*L'architecture
muette a la recherche d'un langage*", published in

Architecture N.395 (1976), pp8-12.

(47) I am referring to experiments like Kazimir Malevitch's famous painting "Black square on a white background" (1913), in which he claimed to have achieved "...the culmination of the liberation of art from the world of will of representation", K. Malevitch, *"Suprematismus - Die Gegenstandlose Welt"* (Cologne, 1962); or the experiment of Marcel Duchamp who exhibited, in Paris, his "bicycle wheel", the ready-made object that marks a turning point in the history of visual thought. These experiments indicate the two limiting points for the abolition of representation: extreme abstraction and extreme realism.

(48) U. Eco, *"A theory of semiotics"*, Indiana University Press (Indiana, 1976), p17.

(49) A. Silipo, *"Grammatica"*, in the *Dizionario enciclopedico dell'architettura e dell'urbanismo*, Edited by P. Portoghesi (Istituto Editoriale Romano, 1968 and 1969), Vol 3, p124.

(50) P. Portoghesi, *"Borromini, architecture, language"*, Editions Vincent Freal (Paris, 1969), p7.

(51) B. Zevi, *"L'architecture muette a la recherche d'un language"*, op. cit., p10.

(52) It is also known that Saussure could himself be responsible for some of the confusion between natural languages and architecture when he wrote the famous passage, saying that: "*A linguistic unit is similar to a determined part of a building*". See F. de Saussure, "*Cours de linguistique generale*", Editions Payot (Paris, 1960), p171.

(53) See l'Abbe Batteux, "*Les beaux arts reduits a un meme principe*" (Paris, 1746) or, perhaps even more significant, F. Hugues d'Ancarville, "*Antiquites etrusques, grecques et romaines*" (Paris, 1767), Vol 4. Both documents are in the "Bibliotheque Nationale" in Paris.

(54) On the question of absent-minded perception, see W. Benjamin, "*Le mythe et la violence*", Editions De Noel (Paris, 1971); also from the same author, "*Some motifs on Baudelaire*", published in "*Illuminations*", Editions Fontana/Collins (London, 1973), pp157-202. Finally, see M. Tafuri, "*Theories and history of architecture*", Granada Books (London, 1980), especially chapter 2, "*Architecture as indifferent object and the crisis of critical attention*".

(55) C.S. Pierce, "*Connected papers*", The Belknap Press of Harvard University (Cambridge, Mass., 1960); C. Morris, "*Foundations of the theory of science*", in the

International Encyclopedia of unified science Vol 2,
Chicago University Press (1938).

- (56) M. Bense, *"Aesthetica"*, Agis Verlag (Baden-Baden, 1965), especially part V; also M. Bense, *"Urbanismus und Semiothik"*, published in *"Einführung in die Informationstheoretische Aesthetik"*, Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag (Hamburg, 1969). See also G. Pasqualotto, *"Avantgardia e tecnologia. Walter Benjamin, Max Bense e i problemi dell'estetica tecnologica"*, Officina (Roma, 1971). Finally, see also the article by M. Bense, *"Semiotique, esthetique et design"*, published in *Architecture d'Aujourd'hui* N.173 (1975), pp107-112.

- (57) It is not accidental that Bense refers directly to the theses of R.S. Hartmann on the "mathematical measurement of value". See M. Bense, *"Zusammenfassende Grundlegung Moderner Aesthetik"*, in *"Aesthetica"*, op. cit. Part V, p319 ff. Concerning this, Pasqualotto has written: "It is true that the value of an aesthetic object is not inherent to it. It is, however, also true that the value attributed to it is not a value understood traditionally, according to pure axiological categories or according to parameters of conscience, but it is identified with its describability. In other words, the qualities of value, being describable quantities, lose any aura of metaphysical

indeterminateness and can be circumscribed within the area of measurable quantitative phenomenon. Evaluation thus becomes a simple description." G. Pasqualotto, "Avantgardia e tecnologia. Walter Benjamin, Max Bense e i problemi dell'esthetica tecnologica", op. cit., p30.

(58) "The death of the semantic" was already predicted by W. Benjamin when he spoke of the "loss of the aura of artistic work" in his essay "The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction", published in "Illuminations", op. cit., pp219-254.

(59) A. Martinet, "Elements de linguistique generale", Editions A. Colin (Paris, 1970).

(60) E. Garroni, "Progetto di semiotica", Laterza (Bari, 1972); L. Hjelmslev, "Prolegomena to a theory of language", Indiana University Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics (Baltimore, 1953).

(61) G. Morpugo-Tagliabue, "I problemi di una semiologia architettonica", published in the Bolletino dell'instituto di studi d'architettura Palladio N.10 (Vicenza, 1968), p290.

(62) G.G. Granger, "Pensee, logique, language - Hommage a Gaston Bachelard", P.U.F. (Paris, 1957), p35.

(63) G.E. Lessing, "Lacoon" (Berlin, 1766), reimpression

by Minkoff Publications (Geneva, 1964).

(64) E. Garroni, *"Progetto di semiotica"*, op. cit., p86.

(65) C. Norbert-Schultz, *"Le systeme logique de l'architecture"*, Collection Architecture + Recherches, Dessart et Mardaga (Bruxelles, 1974).

(66) U. Eco, *"La struttura assente. Introduzione alla ricerca semiologica"*, Editions Bompiani (Milano, 1968), p269.

(67) Ibid op. cit., p135.

(68) Group 107, *"Semiotique de l'espace"*, Institut de l'Environnement (Paris, 1973).

(69) Group 107, *"Semiotique des plans"*, Institut de l'Environnement (Paris, 1973), p15.

(70) P. Boudon, *"Figuration graphique en architecture"*, A.R.E.A. (Paris, 1974).

(71) Ibid op. cit.

(72) Ibid op. cit., p115.

(73) The notion of intentionality is, here, used in the sense that Giddens proposed: *"Such intentionality is a routine feature of human conduct and does not imply that actors have definite goals consciously held in mind during the course of their activities."* A.

- Giddens, "Central problems in social theory", op, cit., p56.
- (74) R. de Fusco, "L'architettura come mass medium. Note per una semiologia architettonica", Delano Libri (Bari, 1967), p76.
- (75) On that important point, see U. Eco, "Trattato di semiotica generale", Editions Bompiani (Milano, 1975), pp93-105.
- (76) M. Gandolsonas & D. Agrest, "Semiotics and architecture; ideological consumption of theoretical work", published in *Oppositions* N.1 (1973), pp93-100.
- (77) Ibid op. cit., p99.
- (78) Ibid op. cit., p100.
- (79) Go back to p103 of this study.
- (80) See S. Mallarme, "La musique et les Lettres", Collection Points (Paris, 1972).
- (81) J. Kristeva, "La semiologie comme science critique", published in "Theorie d'ensemble", Editions Minuit (Paris, 1968), p45.
- (82) On the transformation of "combat languages" into "languages of pleasure", see R. Barthes, "Le plaisir du texte", Collection Points (Paris, 1973).

(83) On the theme of semiology as ideology, see the excellent article by M. Cacciari, "*Vita cartesii est simplicissima*", published in *Contropiano* N.2 (1970), pp375-399.

(84) The subject of power will be examined later.

(85) This is the first alternative mentioned in p73-74.

(86) We are, of course, referring to R. Barthes' "*Mythologies*", Collection Points (Paris, 1970), p151.

HISTORY AND DESIGN

(87) F. Nietzsche, "*Unzeitgemasse Betrachtungen, Zweites Stuck: Vom Nutzen Und Nachteil Der Historie Fur Das Leben*", published in "*Oeuvres philosophiques completes: le gai savoir. Les fragments posthumes (1881-82)*", Editions Plon (Paris, 1967), p223.

(88) K. Popper, "*The poverty of historicism*", Routledge & Kegan Paul, 4th edition (London, 1974).

(89) N. Pevsner, "*Modern architecture and the historian, or the return of historicism*", published in the *Journal of the RIBA*, 3rd series LXVIII (April 1961), p230-240.

(90) This method was used by people like R. Banham in "*Theory and design in the first machine age*",

Architectural Press (London, 1960), S. Giedion in "Space, time and architecture", Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1967) and N. Pevsner in "Pioneers of modern design from William Morris to Walter Gropius", Penguin Books (Middlesex, 1966).

(91) Cf. "Revivals e storicismo nell'architettura italiana contemporanea", open discussion with R. Gabetti and P. Portoghesi published in *Casabella* N.318 (1967), p14.

(92) Le Corbusier, "La charte d'Athenes", Editions Payot (Paris, 1942). It is worth remembering that the problem of the historical centres was stated in exactly the same way by two usually contrasted masters, Le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright. By reducing the semantic polyvalency of the old structures to the generic concept of "organism", by producing a neat cut between old and new, both masters proposed to conceptually enclose the historical centres in an abstract dimension. They both proposed their "mummification" and their reduction to "silent museums", to the state of unusable fetishes because they represented, in their eyes, a danger to modern life. See F.L. Wright, "An organic architecture, the architecture of democracy", Lund Humphries (London, 1939) and Le Corbusier, "The city of tomorrow and its planning", Architectural Press, (London, 1971).

- (93) L. Benevolo has written much on the problem of historical centres, but the most complete of his essay is the winner of the A. Della Rocca Prize, "*La conservazione dell'abitato antico a Roma*", published in *L'architettura, cronache e storia* N.6 (1956), pp7-19. See also by the same author, "*Continuità e conservazione*", published in *Casabella continuità* N.236 (1960), pp52-53.
- (94) These architects have produced an enormous amount of written material, but the most representative are: B. Huet, "*Anachroniques d'architecture*", Editions AAM (Bruxelles, 1981); R. Krier, "*L'espace de la ville, théorie et pratique*", Editions AAM (Bruxelles, 1982); L. Krier, "*Rational architecture*", Editions AAM (Bruxelles, 1978); and A. Barey, "*La déclaration de Bruxelles*", Editions AAM (Bruxelles, 1980).
- (95) See note 54.
- (96) V. Gregotti, "*Il territorio dell'architettura*", Edizioni Feltrinelli (Milano, 1966), p137.
- (97) Ibid op. cit., p132.
- (98) Ibid op. cit., p133.
- (99) G. Samona, "*L'urbanistica e l'avvenire della città negli stati europei*", Edizioni Laterza (Bari, 1963), p251.

- (100) Most characteristic of these studies are A. Rossi's "*L'architettura della città*", op. cit. and C. Aymonimo's "*L'edificio e l'ambiente, premesse alla progettazione*", Edizioni Laterza (Bari, 1967).
- (101) B. Zevi, Editorial in *L'architettura, Cronache e Storia* N.93 (1963), p3.
- (102) On the work of "Neo-Liberty", see P. Portoghesi, "*Dal neo-realismo al neo-liberty*", published in *Comunità* N.65 (1958), pp36-45, but mainly "*L'impegno delle nuove generazioni*" published in *Aspetti dell'arte contemporanea*, catalogue of the "Rassegna internazionale di architettura, pittura, scultura e grafica" in *l'Aquila* (1963), Edizioni Dell'Ateneo (Roma, 1963). See also, in the same catalogue, F. Tentori, "*D'ou venons nous? Qui sommes nous? Ou allons nous?*", p264, with the autobiographical and self-critical contributions of many protagonists of "Neo-Liberty".
- (103) See C. Rowe & F. Koetter, "*Collage City*", MIT Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1978); K. Popper, "*Utopia and violence*" and "*Towards a rational theory of tradition*", both published in "*Conjectures and refutations*", Routledge & Kegan Paul (London, 1963).
- (104) Le Corbusier, "*The Radiant City*", Editions Faber &

Faber (London, 1967).

(105) The terms "excess of history", "antiquarian veneration" and "weakening of the present" are recurrent in Nietzsche's essay, *"Unzeitgemasse Betrachtungen, Zweites Stuck: Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie fur das Leben"*, op. cit..

5. THE BURDEN OF ANTHROPOLOGISM

(106) Go to chapter "The unpoetical dwelling of man".

(107) M. Tafuri, *"Theories and history of architecture"*, Granada Publications (London, 1980), p236.

(108) K. Marx, *"Theses sur Feuerbach et l'ideologie allemande"*, Editions 10/18 (Paris, 1971), p213.

(109) On that subject, see M. Foucault, *"The order of things, an archaeology of the human sciences"*, op. cit., especially chapter 5.

(110) Ibid op. cit., p322.

(111) Ibid op. cit., p342.

PART FOUR

An alternative method

1. THE HISTORICAL SLEEP

"Since it is not for us to create a plan for the future that will hold for all time, all the more surely what we, contemporaries, have to do is the uncompromising critical evaluation of all that exists" (1).

For many years, now, in the disciplines known as the history of ideas, the history of science, the history of philosophy, the history of thought and the history of literature, a very important reversal has been taking place: attention is being turned away from the vast unities such as "periods" or centuries, to the phenomena of rupture and discontinuity. Beneath the great continuities of thought, beneath the homogeneous manifestations of a single mind or of a collective mentality, beneath the persistence of a particular genre, a particular form, discipline or theoretical activity, one is trying to detect the incidence of interruptions; interruptions whose status and nature vary considerably. There are the "epistemological acts and thresholds" described by Bachelard (2): they suspend the continuous accumulation of knowledge and force it to enter a new time; they direct historical analysis away from the search for silent origins and the never-ending tracing back to the original precursors, towards the search for a new type of rationality and its various effects. There are the

"displacements and transformations" of concepts in the analyses of Canguilhem (3): they show that the history of a concept is not wholly and entirely that of its progressive refinement, its continuously increasing rationality but, instead, that of the many theoretical contexts in which it developed and matured. There is also the distinction between the microscopic and macroscopic scales in the history of science, which we also owe to Canguilhem (4), in which events and their consequences are not arranged in the same way at both levels. There are the recurrent distributions which reveal several pasts, several forms of connections, several networks of determination for one and the same science (5). There are the "architectural unities" of systems which are concerned, not with the description of cultural traditions, influences and continuities, but with the internal coherence, axioms, deductive connections and compatibilities (6). Lastly, the most radical discontinuities are the breaks effected by a work of theoretical transformation *"which establishes a science by detaching it from the ideology of its past by revealing this past as ideological"* (7).

To all these, one should add the literary analysis which takes, now, as its unity, not the spirit of a particular period, not "groups" or "schools", "generations" or "movements" and not even the personality of the author in

the interplay of his life and his creation, but the particular structure of a given work, book or text (8). It has become a principle not to regard the point at which we are standing at the present as the outcome of a teleological progression which it would be one's business to reconstruct historically: that kind of scepticism, regarding ourselves and what we are here and now, which prevents us from assuming that what we have now is better than, or more than what we had in the past.

This shift in emphasis has several important consequences: Firstly, there is the surface-effect already mentioned, that of the proliferation of discontinuities throughout the spectrum of the history of ideas. The long series formed by the progress of consciousness, or the teleology of reason, or the evolution of human thought have all been broken up. This history has questioned the themes of convergence and culmination and has doubted the possibility of creating totalities. It has led, instead, to the individualisation of different series without being able to reduce them to a linear process. Therefore, in the place of the continuous chronology of reason which progressively unfolds itself, we have different scales irreducible to a single and unique law or to the general model of a consciousness which acquires, progresses and remembers. The second consequence is that the notion of discontinuity has come to assume a major role in the

historical disciplines. For, in its classical forms, the discontinuous was both the given and that which cannot be admitted: it was the raw material of history which, through analysis, had to be re-arranged, reduced and eventually erased in order to allow the continuous character of events to emerge. Discontinuity was the stigma of temporal dislocation and the task of the classical historian was to remove it at all costs from history. It has, now, become one of the basic elements of historical analysis and its role is three-fold: firstly, it constitutes a deliberate operation on the part of the historian (and not a characteristic of the raw material that he has to work on); secondly, it is the result of his description (and not something which has to be eventually eliminated); thirdly, it is the concept that the historian never ceases to specify (instead of neglecting it as a uniform and independent blank between two positive figures). One of the most important feature of this new approach to historical analysis is probably this displacement of the discontinuous; its transference, from being simply the obstacle to be overcome and removed, to being the work itself; its integration into the discourse of the historian in which it no longer plays the role of an external condition that must be reduced, but that of a working concept; and, therefore, the inversion of signs by which it is no longer the negative of historical reading (that which indicates the limits of its power, its

"failure"), but its positive element which determines its objects and validates its analysis.

There is still a third consequence which follows from this reversal: the theme and the possibility of a total history begins to disappear and we see, instead, the emergence of something very different which we might call a "general history". The project of a total history is one which seeks to reconstitute the overall form of a civilisation, the principle of a society, the significance common to all the phenomena of a period and, finally, the laws that account for their cohesion. Such a project is necessarily linked to two or three hypotheses. It is assumed that between all the events that characterise a well-defined situation in space and time, between all the occurring phenomena, it must be possible to establish a system of homogeneous relations, a network of causality which would allow the derivation from each of these events of relations of analogy that would show how they symbolise one another or how they express one and the same thing: a guiding principle or a general spirit. It is also supposed at the outset that one and the same form of historicity operates upon economic structures, social institutions and customs, technological practices and political behaviour; this form of historicity subjects them all to the same type of transformation. Lastly, it is assumed that history, itself, may be articulated into great unities

which contain within themselves their own principle of cohesion. These are the postulates that are, now, being challenged by the new type of historical analysis when it speaks of series, divisions, units, difference of levels, shifts and so forth. A description which wants to be total always draws all the phenomena it examines under one single centre - be it a principle, a meaning, a spirit, or a world-view. A general history deploys, instead, the space of their dispersion and multiply the centres.

One is already beginning to suspect what kind of changes are being sought in the analysis of architectural discourses. The new path sought, here, requires the radical questioning of the traditional conception of historical analysis which is still profoundly impregnated with a teleological rationalism, inherited from the Enlightenment philosophy. One is beginning to suspect and even to prove, in some particular instances, that the history of reason is neither the history of a smooth and continuous development, nor the history of the progressive manifestation of reason, already present in its origin and which historical analysis would only help to make it emerge. One is beginning to suspect that this type of history and rationality is nothing but the effect of the retrospective illusion of a given historical result which thinks of its origin as the anticipation of its end.

The real history of the development of human knowledge

appears to me as being subject to altogether different laws than this teleological wish of the religious triumph of reason. One is beginning to conceive of this history as a history of radical discontinuities; a history of profound re-arrangements which, while preserving the continuity of the existence of the various domains of knowledge (and not even in all cases), introduces by means of a rupture the reign of a new "logic" that literally displaces the previous one and takes over, instead of being merely its improved version.

One must add, at this stage, that this epistemological mutation of historical analysis is far from being completed; and as far architectural an urban analysis is concerned, it has barely been registered or reflected upon. It is as if it was particularly difficult, in the history in which men retrace their own ideas and knowledge about the environment that they produce and live in, to formulate a general history of discontinuity. It is as if, in the field where we have become used to looking for origins, to pushing further and further the lines of antecedents, to reconstituting traditions and to having constant recourse to metaphors of life, we felt a particularly strong repugnance to conceive of differences and discontinuities or to dissociate the reassuring forms of the identical.

There is, of course, a good reason for this: if the

history of architecture could remain the locus of uninterrupted continuities, if it could weave, around everything that man says and does, obscure syntheses which anticipate for him, prepare him and lead him toward his future, it would provide a privileged shelter for the sovereignty of human consciousness. Continuous history is the indispensable correlative of the founding function of the subject: it is the guarantee that everything that has eluded him will eventually be restored to him, some time in the future; it is the promise that, one day, the subject will once again be able to appropriate, to bring back under his sway, all those things that have been kept away from him by difference. Making historical analysis the discourse of the continuous, and making human consciousness the original and sole subject of all historical development, are the two sides of the same system of thought and the same structure of knowledge. In this system, time is conceived in terms of totalisations, and revolutions are no more than particular moments of consciousness.

In various forms, the theme of continuity has played a constant role since the nineteenth century: to preserve against all decentrings the supreme sovereignty of the subject and the twin figures of anthropology and humanism. The same conservative function can be seen at work in the theme of cultural totalities, in the theme of the search

for the origin of things and in that of a living and open history. One comes immediately in face of a general outcry and is accused of trying to murder history as soon as one starts using, in a too obvious way, the categories of the discontinuous and of difference, the concepts of threshold and of transformation. One is immediately denounced as a traitor for attacking the inalienable rights of history and the foundations of any possible historicity. But one must not be deceived. What is being bewailed is not really the disappearance of history but, rather, the disappearance of that specific form of history which was secretly related to the synthetic activity of human consciousness. What is being bewailed is that ideological use of history by which one tries to restore to man all that has escaped and eluded him for more than a century. All the treasures of bygone days are crammed into the fortress of this history: it was believed to be secure; it was sacralised; it was made the last resting place for all anthropological and humanist thought. But one can no longer affirm, in the present situation, that history is living and continuous; one can no longer seriously pretend that is is, for the subject, a place of rest, a place of certainty and reconciliation, a place of "tranquilised sleep" (9).

It is Tafuri who identified the consequences of the accounts of history as a continuous process, with all the

implications that such accounts have had on architectural culture:

"Culture has identified its own function as mediator in such ideological terms that its cunning has reached the point where it imposes the forms of disputation and protests upon its own products. The higher the sublimation of the conflicts on a formal plane, the more hidden the cultural and social structures expressed by that sublimation process" (10).

What, in my opinion, is the most urgent task facing contemporary design culture is the formulation of a more effective type of analysis. An analysis starting from a redefinition of theoretical practice which would do away with the traditional categories of the mind, the subject's creative will and inventiveness, and of representation.

It is the total reliance on primary visual experience that holds the key to the understanding of the functioning of aesthetic discourses in architecture. While this visual predominance seems obvious and natural, it is, nevertheless, responsible for the structure as well as the content of these discourses: a mechanism which reduces the nature of the physical and social organisation to the visual properties and patterns of settlements. This dominance is also a function of the epistemological fallacy which posits the obviousness of perceptual experience and visible objects as the basis of knowledge

and explanation (11).

This mode of relating to the object determines the ways in which this object is perceived, received, cognised and finally translated into knowledge. This visual dominance gains even further momentum by the establishment of the appearance as the prominent aspect of reality, in fact, as the only valid one. As far as discourses are concerned, this has several effects:

a)- It tends to overshadow other equally (or more, or less) important aspects of that reality; aspects which are not immediately or, in some cases, not at all given to visual perception.

b)- It artificially sets up and defines the object of understanding as only the visible aspect of objects, their immediate appearance, and not their complex nature as the products of a certain labour. It renders, thereby, the knowledge of them even more problematic.

c)- Finally and, perhaps, more fundamentally, there is the prominence given at the outset to the appearance; a prominence which favours and encourages empirical and experimental modes of analysis to the detriment of the theoretical and discursive modes.

This visual dominance is, in turn, further strengthened by the theme of representation which denies the possibility

of an evaluation of architecture in its own terms, as a production process, and allows it, instead, to appear only as the expression of another reality. This theme can only be overturned by identifying the individual concepts and mechanisms which operate in discourse and which are directly responsible for the prominence given to the visual.

For that purpose, it is inevitable that one comes face to face with the most influential and the most lasting philosophical edifice ever erected in human history: the Hegelian metaphysics. It is not an exaggeration to say that almost all the interpretations of the development of architecture and artistic production, for that matter, have been achieved under the shadow of Hegelian thought. The history of architecture has always been, in this sense, the story of re-interpreting again and again the concepts of "representation" and "idea", central to Hegel's philosophy of art, thereby, remaining firmly within the legacy of his thought (12). This is why a confrontation with Hegel is not only inevitable, but necessary. Let us briefly examine the nature of Hegel's contribution and the main features of his philosophy of art.

Hegel's philosophy sets out, not only to explain the structure of the world and the scope of human knowledge, but also to provide a universal system of human society.

It sets out to derive a-priori what at first seems the most arbitrary and contingent among all observable phenomena: the phenomenon of history. Beneath the superficial chaos of everyday social interactions, his philosophy claims to be able to see the workings of a spiritual necessity, a kind of permanent proof of the emergence of one moment of history from the one that preceded it and which moves from premise to conclusion with all the rigour of a mathematical theorem (13). The privileged place occupied by this philosophy in architectural discourses can be explained by its inherent consolatory value, if not by its actual truth. History tends, with Hegel, to be viewed under the aspect of necessity, and the simple fact that two moments are contemporaneous is often regarded as the demonstration of some real connection between them.

For Hegel, art, as much as religion and philosophy, is a way in which the idea of God comes to consciousness. One could, therefore, compare his artistic idealisation of everyday forms (art as the medium which conveys images of human excellence) to the revision of the everyday categories which he demands from the philosopher; for, both are intended to reveal the underlying unity of the superficially opposed realms of the spirit and of phenomenal reality. This apparent divergence is, according to Hegel, only one of form and not of content (14).

Philosophy, as an abstract medium of thought, can grasp the unity of the common or universal spirit with the phenomenal world; the medium of the visual arts limits this unity to the perceivable and, thereby, to that perceivable manifestation of the "idea" which is the union of an individual spirit with its natural body. Against the category of the "imitation of nature", Hegel offers the notion that the function of art is to represent the "idea". The Classical and Renaissance world believed not only that the task of any artistic endeavour was to imitate nature, but also that excellence could only be achieved through a proper imitation of nature. By rejecting this, Hegel aimed, in his critique of the classical category of "mimesis", at locating art and artistic activity within culture when he spoke of art as "...proceeding from an absolute idea", and assigned as its end, "*the sensuous representation of the idea itself*" (15).

Hegel used the term "idea" to convey, not only some abstract and platonic image that has lodged itself in the mind as a kind of constitutive a-priori, but also to mark a mode and an awareness of concrete reality. Against the common sense conception of reality which sees it as consisting of a subjective factor and an objective factor independent from it, Hegel proposes the concept of the "idea" as the unity which, he says, exists at a deeper

level between the two components of the dualistic picture of the real world (16).

This metaphysical faith in the divine dignity of artistic activity, as the representation of the absolute idea, was expressed in very similar ways by Winckelmann, who is widely regarded as the founding father of art history as a discipline:

"The task of art is to represent the idea to direct perception in sensuous form...it follows, therefore, that the level of excellence of art in attaining a realisation adequate to the idea must depend on the grade of unity with which the idea and the form display themselves as fused into one" (17).

Two main points are made by Hegel concerning artistic activity in the language of the concrete universal: firstly, that the subject-matter of an individual work is the fusion of nature and spirit in the free individual; secondly, that the history of art has a certain kind of coherence. There is also a third claim: the claim that whatever is conveyed by a work of art is conveyed in concrete or sensuous terms - shown, as it were, instead of being stated.

In the *"Philosophy of history"* (18), Hegel develops his concept of history which, he says, is based on the principle that every civilisation is characterised by its

own peculiar and distinctive spirit, its "Zeitgeist". This spirit is the overwhelming power that holds together everything and every individual in its spell. In his turn, the artist/designer, through the idea, appropriates the real world and, by doing so, acquires a "world-view" or, as Hegel says, a "Weltanschauung". This world-view, lodged in the conscious or the unconscious constitution of the human mind, becomes the *modus operandi* of all social activity and production (19). As a result, the artist/designer, in the act of creating, is simply trying to represent this pervading spirit in sensuous form.

This peculiar view of historical development has explicitly been offered as the basis for the critical evaluation of architecture as, for example, by Wofflin who wrote:

"Architecture is an expression of its time insofar as it reflects the corporeal essence of man and his particular habits of deportement and movement; it does not matter whether they are light and playful or solemn and grave, or whether his attitude to life is agitated or calm; in a word, architecture expresses the "Lebensgefühl" of an epoch" (20).

Underlying the various discourses in architecture and urban design, lie the categories of Hegelian art criticism and philosophy. This philosophy has acted as the guiding principle for all the interpretations of the development

of architecture, up to the present day. Even when this is carefully hidden, we are still driven to a large extent by the belief that architecture and art are but representations of a peculiar vision of the world by a society in which:

"The work of art can only be the expression of the God if...it takes and extracts without adulteration...the indwelling spirit of the nation" (21).

2. THE LEGACY OF HEGEL

The theoretical debt that traditional criticism owes to the legacy of Hegel's philosophy is immense. The use of the Hegelian model explains why historical criticism has, for so long, been synonymous with the discourse of the continuous and of human consciousness; a discourse which rests on the promise that man will eventually achieve his wholeness and freedom, since:

"Freedom is the highest destiny of the spirit" (22).

But insofar as man's empirical condition in the world does not, at first, correspond to his essence, insofar as freedom is only his destiny, it needs to be worked out. This is why Hegel claims that the entire course of history is but the expression of man's multifaceted efforts to realise this essential freedom; and much of Hegel's philosophy is but the attempt to reveal patterns within and among the ways in which man does this. Artistic activity, including architecture, fits exactly within this scheme, as one further effort among others to realise this freedom.

It is on the basis of the historicity of the "idea" that architectural culture founded its debate. But the recognition of the close link between architectural discourse and Hegel is not sufficient in itself. One has still to identify and describe the mass of notions that

sustain this relationship; these notions on which the idea of history as a continuous process is based; notions that, each in its own peculiar way, diversify the theme of continuity and contribute to the structuring of architectural discourses as they appear today.

Take the notion of "tradition": it is intended to give a special temporal status to a group of phenomena which are both successive and identical. This notion puts the past in order, not just chronologically, but also systematically. It separates the positive from the negative, the orthodox from the heretical and that which is obligatory and relevant from the mass of irrelevant or merely interested opinions and data. In this way, it makes it possible to rethink the dispersion of history in the form of the "Same" and the "Identical", by eliminating the "Other". It allows the reduction of the difference proper to every beginning in order to pursue, without discontinuity, the endless search for the origin of events. Tradition enables one to isolate the new against the background of permanence and to transfer its merit to originality and genius, that is, to the decisions proper to the individual subject.

Then, there is the notion of "Zeitgeist", or the "spirit of the age": this notion allows one to establish, between the simultaneous or successive phenomena of a given period in history, a community of meanings and symbolic links; it

allows one to establish an interplay of resemblance and reflection which, in turn, permits the sovereignty of a collective consciousness to emerge as the principle of unity and explanation. In such a theme, culture is always seen, in all its different aspects, as the reflection of the stages through which human history passes in its continuous evolution; a sort of play of mirrors where everything is animated by the image of a collective consciousness. Through the "spirit of the age", one is able to show how the different texts or works, with which one is dealing, refer to one another; how they organise themselves into one single figure; how they converge with all the institutions and the different practices; and, finally, how they carry within themselves the meanings common to a whole period. Each element is taken as the expression of the totality to which it belongs. In this way, one is able to substitute to the diversity of things said, a great and uniform text which has never been articulated before and which reveals, for the first time ever, what men really meant, not only in their words and texts, their discourses and writings, but also in the institutions, practices and techniques as well as in the objects that they produced. In relation to this implicit sovereign and communal meaning, statements always appear in superabundant proliferation, since it is to that meaning alone that they all refer and to it alone that they owe their truth: a real plethora of signifying

elements in relation to one single signified, the "spirit of the age". At the same time, this concept, as represented in the various disciplinary fields of human activity, presupposes that the notion of expression itself is given a specific and relational meaning. Examples of the use of this notion are very easy to find in architectural texts. Take, for instance, Nicolas Pevsner who wrote:

"It is the spirit of the age that pervades a period's social life, its religion, its scholarship and its art" (23).

This collective consciousness, expressed as the spirit of a collective archetype, against which all possible deviations or orthodoxies can be measured, is:

"...always clear and yet obscure, always obvious and yet hidden, everywhere and nowhere at the same time" (24).

There is also the notion of "influence" which provides a solid support for the facts of transmission and communication. "Influence" is a notion which refers to an apparently causal process (but with neither rigorous delimitation nor theoretical definition) the phenomena of resemblance and repetition. A concept which links at a distance and through time - as if through the mediation of a medium of propagation - such defined unities as, for instance, individuals, oeuvres, notions or theories. What this concept has provided is a reason for any event, an

explanatory principle which alludes to a cause and effect determination. This is how Frankl, for instance, saw the purpose of this notion in aesthetic criticism:

"One of the tasks which particularly preoccupies the art critic is to demonstrate the dependence of works of art on those that went before and the influence of different regions or schools on one another" (25).

To be influenced means, in this way, to be catalogued, classified and serialised according to the common features that one might or might not share with others that have preceded one or that are contemporaneous with one. To be influenced means to be formally given a specific place in a chain of causal relationships and to be given historical intelligibility at the same time. Any work that does not fit within the specific place that one is given in this taxonomy would be discarded as not representative of one's oeuvre and as a simple "hiccup" in an otherwise smooth continuity.

There is yet another dimension in which this notion of "influence" is used, this time not between individuals or schools, but between the ideas, beliefs and conceptions expressed in distinct disciplines. An illustration of this type of influence was given by Panofsky in his explanation of the connections between Gothic architecture and scholasticism:

"A connection between Gothic art and scholasticism is more

concrete that a mere paralellism and yet more general than those individual influences which are inevitably exerted on painters, sculptors and architects by erudite advisers. In contrast to a mere paralellism, the connection which I have in mind is a genuine cause and effect relationship. But in contrast to an individual influence, this cause and effect relationship comes about by diffusion rather than by direct import. It comes about by the spreading of what might be called, for want of a better term, a mental habit...Such mental habits are at work in all and every civilisation" (26).

But the notions that must be suspended, above all, are those that emerge in the most immediate way: the notion of "oeuvre" and that of the "author". When one speaks of an author's oeuvre (that could be either writings, buildings, paintings, etc...), it is because one imagines that this oeuvre is defined by a certain expressive function. Once the environment, for instance, is conceived only in its physical and formal dimension, it becomes possible to assign to it a unity defined by the boundaries of its physical existence and to assume that this unity has an immediate and homogeneous coherence, the same coherence that one seeks in the oeuvre of a writer. Conversely, the notion of the "oeuvre", based on the assumption of a pre-given homogeneity and coherence, allows those who set out to analyse it to fix, as their task, the bringing to

light of that coherence. Thus, the circle becomes closed. All the contradictions and antinomies are silenced in order for a general thematic to emerge and be presented as the organising principle of the oeuvre. As a result, all the conflicts are avoided by the exclusion of the contradictions and the promotion of the consistencies to the role of principles.

Closely related to this notion of "oeuvre" is that of the "author" or "subject". In the interpretation of an oeuvre, one is always assuming that there must be a level at which it emerges, in all its fragments, as the expression of the thoughts, experience, imagination, the unconscious workings of the subject or, indeed, the historical determinations which operated upon him while producing this oeuvre. These two notions explain the fact that representation and expression are the modes that dominate architectural thinking: the coherence found in the object/oeuvre is always translated as the expressive projection of the actual author/designer, of his mood which, in turn, represents a certain "age", a certain class, religion, etc... This is precisely what Panofsky meant when he wrote that:

"The intrinsic meaning or content is apprehended by ascertaining those underlying principles which reveal the basic attitudes of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion, unconsciously

qualified by one personality and condensed into one work"
(27).

All these notions, that I have tried to describe above, show the kind of interpretative process at work in traditional historical analysis and to which the Hegelian philosophy has provided the ideological foundation. This idealist approach to critical analysis has as its sole objective the perpetual restoring of a consciousness (collective or individual) hidden behind the work; it always tries to make appear in the surface of the work what has already been assumed at the very start of the analysis. In it, the history of ideas become coupled with that of the expression, transcription and reflection of ideas into sensuous forms. Such an analysis is always the description of origins and effects, of conceptual unities as manifested in iconographic or stylistic unities. In short, it is an analysis conceptually absorbed within the typically Hegelian couple of Idea-Form, reinforcing the traditional dichotomy of form and content.

One must question those ready-made syntheses, those groupings that one normally accepts without examination; those links and relations whose validity is recognised from the outset. One must oust those forms and obscure forces by which an event is linked to another because they happened at the same period or emanated from the same individual. Instead of according them unqualified and

spontaneous value, one must accept, in the name of methodological rigour, that they concern only a population of dispersed events.

One must show that these pre-existing forms of continuity do not come about of themselves, but that they are already the result of a previous construction, the rules of which must be known and the justifications of which must be closely scrutinised. One must indicate in what conditions and in view of which analysis, certain of them might be legitimate and one must point at those which cannot be accepted. What one must do, in fact, is to free the problem that they pose: to recognise that they are not the locus on the basis of which other questions (concerning their internal structure, coherence, systematicity, transformations, etc) may be asked, but that they, themselves, pose a whole cluster of questions (what they are, how they can be defined, what type of laws do they obey, etc). In short, that they may not be what they seem to be at first sight and that they require a theory of them.

3. AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF ANALYSIS

If it was relatively easy to identify and describe, through the examination of the various discourses operating in architecture, the mechanisms by which the foundations for an anthropological and humanist perspective are laid, the description of an alternative approach to critical analysis is a far less obvious task to perform.

If the unities that we described in the previous chapter are suspended, if one agrees to free the dispersed events from all the groupings that purport to be natural and universal, how is one going to derive new ones? And perhaps more importantly, how can one make certain that, whatever new groupings are found, they will allow analysis to bypass and overcome the problems associated with the traditional notions?

It is my belief, however, that once the immediate forms of continuity, which hide the ideological substance of architectural discourses, are suspended, it becomes possible to provide the outline for a serious alternative approach to the problem of design practice. As soon as one is ready to set aside the notions of tradition, Zeitgeist, world-view, oeuvre and subject, an entire field is set free; a vast field, but one that can be described, nonetheless.

The fact that one believes in the necessity of devising new methods of description and analysis in architecture cannot, in my opinion, be subject to discussion. Although I entirely agree that the issue of the legitimacy or non-legitimacy of a specific theoretical model is an important one and that, as such, one which must not be evaded, it is also a fact that the issue cannot be solved solely by trying to prove or disprove the epistemological logic of the model. The issue of the legitimacy of a theoretical model, in a field as that of the environment, is in the final instance a political issue. It sustains or does not sustain its status of "truth" only on the basis of the value and practical application that it has in promoting or not promoting the dominant ideology in a given historical situation.

From the moment when one begins to think of the relation between a certain result and the conditions of its existence as a relation of production and not one of expression, one has freed himself from the conceptual categories for which Hegel has provided the philosophical model. In the method that I would like to describe, the relationships between the physical structure of the environment and the structure of social interactions are no longer expressed in terms of a causal determination, of form and content, representation and idea, subject and object, but in terms of a real process of production.

However, with the rejection of the traditional notions, an immediate problem arises, namely that of the definition of the basis on which one can "periodise" or structure the historical development in design. If, indeed, concepts like periods, tradition and evolution can no longer provide a satisfactory basis for the formulation of knowledge in architecture, what other forms of regularity and other types of relations can be developed?

The answer to this question lies in the identification of the very assumptions on the basis of which forms are produced and developed (that is, conceived, designed, executed and, finally, recognised as such in everyday life). It is the discourse, itself, which becomes the prime object of the analysis; it is the field of this discourse, made up of the totality of all the effective statements (whether spoken, written or drawn) which will constitute the raw material of the analysis. The term "discourse", as a practice, is intended here to convey something more than the fact that human communities exist socially through the medium of language, important though this aspect is (28). It is also intended to convey a lived world of material practices. The object of this search is, therefore, a theoretically structured approach to the *"real world of real human beings"* which is *"not held at a safe distance by the extreme forms of idealist abstraction"* (29). In this way, one is led to the project

of:

a)- A description of discursive events, in search for the unities which form within a particular discourse and which provide it with its internal coherence.

b)- The specification of the relationship between this particular discourse and the non-discursive practices (i.e. political and economic), in search for the precise role that intellectual work plays at a specific moment and in a specific place within what could be called "the total system of social production".

Two further related specifications must be made at this stage. Firstly, the description of discursive events, as intended here, is radically different from what a linguistic analysis might be. In the case of a linguistic analysis, the basic question that has to be answered is always: according to what rules has a particular statement been made and, consequently, according to what rules could similar statements be made? In the description that I have in mind, the question is of a quite different nature, in that it is a matter of finding how it is that a particular statement has appeared in certain defined circumstances and not another.

The second related specification is that such a project cannot be conducted outside a precisely defined spatio-temporal situation. It is not a project of the

search for some metahistorical justification for the architectural practice. It is only the description of the conditions in which discourses are produced at a certain time of history. This time-space thematic has, in the last ten years, become central to the constitution of social theory. This does not just mean that social theory must be historically and spatially specific. More importantly, as a reaction against the functionalist theories of social phenomena (30), many social scientists make the point that social theory must be about the time-space constitution of social structures, right from the start (31). Thus, for instance, Giddens says that:

"Social theory must acknowledge, as it has not done so previously, time-space intersections as essentially involved in social existence" (32).

Such a viewpoint carries a certain number of important consequences. Social structure, for example, cannot be divorced from spatial and temporal structure; the two have to be theorised conjointly and not as the impact of one upon the other (33). As Bourdieu said:

"Practices are defined by the fact that their temporal structure, direction and rythm are constitutive of their meaning" (34).

These spatio-temporal settings for the production of discourses are what Giddens has labelled "locales". Such locales have several effects. Firstly, they structure

people's life path in space and time. They provide the main nodes through which a person's life path must flow. As Therborn put it:

"Being in the world is both inclusive (being a member of a meaningful world) and positional (having a particular place in the world in relation to other members of it)" (35).

Secondly, these institutions can have effects on other people through the constraints that they place on their ability to interact. Thirdly, they provide the main arenas within which interaction takes place; thus, they are the sites of all sorts of conflicts, the medium and the source of most practical and reflexive reason and, generally, the major context in which knowledge-experience about the world is gathered and common awareness is engendered. Fourthly, they provide the activity structure of the day-to-day routines that characterise most parts of most people's life. And fifthly, they are the major sites of the process of socialisation within which collective modes of behaviour are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated and rules are learned but also created (36).

To say that discursive practices are dependent upon the dominant "locales" for their existence and importance is not to denigrate them or to reduce them to simply the effects of other practices. Instead, it is simply to situate them within a historical pattern of determination.

In fact, without this pattern, the very qualities that make a discourse what it is, are jettisoned: the intricacies of interactions, the specificity of particular times and places, the sense of context, etc...

3.1 The description of the design problematic

This description is interested, not in the thematic of the environment as it appears to us in its immediate form, but in the implicit rules which allow this thematic to be formulated, hierarchised and institutionalised.

These formative rules are the constitutive elements of what might be called the "problematic" of design. This concept of problematic designates the particular unity of a theoretical formation and introduces us to a fact peculiar to any discourse. As Althusser explains it:

"A discourse can only pose the problems on the terrain and within the horizon of a definite theoretical structure, i.e. its problematic which constitutes its absolute and definite condition of possibility and the absolute determination of the forms in which all the problems must be posed at any particular moment" (37).

Therefore, the problematic defines primarily a field, a system or a theme. It is a theoretical/conceptual structure; a determined and articulated system of concepts, instruments and modes of theoretical work whose

unity is that of a complex structured whole which is reducible to neither its individual elements nor to some essence. In this sense, any analysis requires the setting up of a problematic. Its real starting point is a problem, however ill-posed it might be. Yet, a problematic can well be ideological, moralistic, technical, or scientific. But this cannot be wholly determined on the sole basis of its internal consistency or the structure of its concepts.

A notion very similar to the problematic was used by Foucault in his attempt to characterise the particular framework which allows any discursive formation (and not only those discourses that are considered to be scientific) to draw the frontiers of the domain within which it speaks of its individual objects (38).

One of the many advantages of working at the level of the formative rules of discourse is that one is no longer tempted by synthesizing operations of a purely psychological kind. One is no longer trying to rediscover the intentions of the subject, the form of his thoughts, what he really meant or, again, the unconscious activity that took place in his mind. One is simply concerned with the discourse itself and with the relationships that are established within it.

However, it is necessary to explain further this concept of problematic in order to grasp the specific nature of

knowledge within it. According to Althusser, this concept: *"opens the way to an understanding of the determination of the visible as visible and, conversely, of the invisible as invisible, as well as the determination of the link binding the visible to the invisible"* (39).

What this quote means is simply that, within a given problematic, the value of what had been deliberately ignored is equal to that which is explicitly stated in discourse. In an analysis of this kind, one must pay as much attention to the presence of statements, concepts or problems, as to their absence. This is how Althusser explains the relationship, within the problematic, between the visible and the invisible:

"Any object or problem, situated on the terrain and within the horizon of the problematic of a given theoretical discipline (i.e. within its definite structured field), is visible. We must take these words in the literal sense... It is literally no longer the eye - the mind's eye - of a subject which sees what exists in the field of a theoretical problematic; it is the field which sees itself in the objects or problems it defines... The same connection that defines the visible also defines the invisible: it is the field of the problematic that defines and structures the invisible as the defined excluded, that is, excluded from the field of visibility and excluded by the existence and peculiar structure of the field of the

problematic. Here again, the invisible is no more a function of the subject's sighting than the visible is. The invisible is the problematic's non-vision of its non-objects; the invisible is the darkness, the blinded eye of the problematic's self-reflection when it scans its non-objects, its non-problems, without seeing them in order not to look at them" (40).

This lengthy quote is, nevertheless, one of extreme importance, in that it clearly sets the limits within which any problem is posed in any particular discipline. It is also these categories of the visible and the invisible which define the criteria of validity for analysis.

The necessity, in analysis, to take into account both that which is explicitly stated in discourse and that which is hidden is the direct consequence of the realisation that the emergence and functioning of any symbolic language is, in the first instance, structured by a certain number of "matter-of-fact" truths which constitute the fundamental a-prioris of a specific historical conjuncture.

The establishment of such a-prioris in the formulation of the different languages, values or sciences is made possible only by ways of massive "omissions". In other words, in the formulation of a language, there is first and foremost a negation, a basic dismissal: the negation

of the fragmentation and multiple nature of reality; the negation of all that might jeopardise the coherence and homogeneity of this language. This is the most important conclusion that Freud arrived at in his work of "deciphering" which, he says, is essential to analysis:

"In the distortion of a text, there is something analogous to murder. The difficulty does not consist in the perpetration of the act, but in the elimination of the traces. It would be necessary to restore to the word "Enstellung" the double meaning it has the right to, although the custom might be lost today. The word should not only mean "to modify the appearance of something", but also "to put elsewhere" or "move to another place". This is why, in numerous cases of the alteration of a text, we hold it necessary to find hidden somewhere, albeit modified and torn from its context, what has been repressed (Das Unterdruckte). But to recognise it is not always easy" (41).

This outright condemnation of the positivist conception of a fact in Freud is also a main theme of Nietzsche's thought in the *"Genealogy of science"* (42), where he stated that all interpretation (i.e. discourse) is polemical: to back one interpretation is to declare war on another. Given that facts have no meaning in themselves, discourse can only find one by making them speak, so that each interpretation of a fact is always only the

interpretation of an earlier interpretation disguised as a plain and positive fact. This conviction that facts are meaningless in themselves defines Nihilism as Nietzsche understood it when he proclaimed the disarray of positivism: no facts, only interpretations (43).

History, as generally understood, implies in effect the accomplishment of works and the transmission of words endowed by meanings; its very possibility rests upon the decision that all gestures and words which afford no positive significance be rejected as unreason. This is history in the dialectical sense of the word: man is what he does and his praxis is what defines reality. But at the interior of this history, and of all history for that matter, "identity" presides. Within it, a single culture enables a number of human beings to articulate a collective "we". This "identity" is possible only by ways of a series of exclusions. If all cultures are finite or limited, this cannot be explained by the fact that no culture will ever succeed in universalising itself. In fact, it is because, in an initial decision (one might say a first division), each culture rejects a certain number of alternatives: oppositions of East and West, dream and reality, tragic and dialectical, etc... But all these oppositions are summed up in the greatest one of all: the opposition of reason and unreason.

Within a single culture, or a single discipline, the same

kind of exclusions occur in the elaboration of each particular discourse. This is why the opting for a particular perspective is not so much a positive act as a negative one: the act which consists in the exclusion of every other alternative, in the negation of the multiple and conflictual nature of reality in order to produce a synthetic and harmonious discourse. It is only through these exclusions that history is possible; it is only through them that it can be articulated.

The dark area of a discourse or a discipline is not what an outdated empiricism wants us to believe: its residue what it leaves outside of it, or that which it cannot conceive of. It is, instead, what is most fragile, in this discourse, under the guises of strong evidence; it is the silences of this discourse. In short, it is all that sounds hollow despite its apparent fullness.

These omissions have also been the object of Thrift's attention in his study of the variability of the availability of knowledge which, he says, depends on the particular spatio-temporal setting (44). He breaks up this category into five types of what he calls "interrelated unknowings":

a)- "unknown", in terms of being totally unheard of at a particular time

b)- "not understood", in terms of not being within the

frame of meaning of a particular historical setting

c)- "hidden", in terms of being hidden from certain members of a society, a region, etc...

d)- "undiscussed", in terms of being taken for granted as true or natural

e)- "distorted", in terms of being known only in a distorted fashion (45).

But while, for Thrift, these types of "interrelated unknowings" are to be ultimately understood as the result of a more or less deliberate action by an individual or group of individuals, the "omissions" of which I spoke earlier cannot be traced back to a specific subject (collective or individual). They cannot be described as the effect of some events extraneous to language.

To study the problematic of architecture means, therefore, to look at its field of knowledge at any given moment of history: that is, the axioms that constitute it, the specific hierarchy and articulation of its concepts, the tensions that are introduced by contradictory survivals and the limits of the space which assures and defines its specificity as a field of knowledge. In this kind of project, one is always sent back to the setting of the relations that characterise the problematic itself. And what one discovers, at the end, is not a configuration or a form, but a defined set of rules which are immanent in the practice of design. It is these formative rules that

allow certain things to be said about architecture and many others to be excluded.

The main question is, therefore that of describing these rules which, once assumed, give to certain tools and techniques a posture as theoretical instruments and a credibility in everyday life as problem-solving methods. And because the concept of the field of knowledge transcends that of a specific disciplinary field, the type of analysis that I propose would allow one to cross the boundaries of the institutionalised disciplines in order to find out the interferences between them. For instance, when dealing with the notion of the environment as "organism", instead of trying to rediscover its sources, one should examine the frequency and depth of the interferences between the natural sciences and the production of architectural discourses (46). One will note that architecture shared, in that specific historical conjuncture, with the natural sciences the same categories of classificatory reasoning. One will examine whether the problematic of the natural sciences has been displaced *en bloc* (that is, whether architecture has borrowed all the structuring categories of natural science), or whether such categorical interferences are fragmentary and episodic. One will also map the possible changes that the various categories or concepts undergo when displaced from one discourse to another. However, one must be careful not

to describe the various relationships between disciplines in terms of "influences" which, as we have seen, remains a very ambiguous notion (47). Instead, they must be described in terms of the overdetermination of one discourse upon the other. For instance, in the case above, the natural sciences would be said to function as the "overdetermining" ideological region, since its categories seem to structure the problematic of almost all the other ideological regions in that given conjuncture (philosophy, linguistics, architecture, etc...).

But how does one set out to describe these formative rules?

Let me, first, reiterate the fundamental pre-requisite which lies at the basis of the method that I am trying to describe: that analysis, as understood here (i.e. a process of acquisition of knowledge), is a production of meanings starting from the meaningful traces of events. Such a project is never definitive, but always provisional, since there is no way of knowing whether all the pieces of the puzzle are in one's possession. As such, analysis is an instrument for the "deconstruction" of reality.

Deconstruction appears to be a word denoting a negative operation. This word was first introduced into the language of critical theory by Derrida who warned that it

must not be understood in a negative way (to demolish), but in the positive way (to circumscribe) (48). Before Derrida's introduction of the word, which has now become widely employed (49), it existed only among grammarians for whom it designated the analysis of sentence constructions which only come to light when disturbed by deconstruction. Similarly, the aim of a deconstruction of discursive formations would be to show how they are constructed. Deconstruction is, therefore, an attempt to establish a theory of discourses, especially of philosophical discourses. Such a programme is, without doubt, critical: the philosophical statement means only to make manifest the referent which it invokes, to show it or to allow it to exist; the philosophical statement means to be or, rather, claims to be governed by the thing itself, but its deconstruction destroys this illusion. Deconstruction shows that it is not because it reflects the thing itself that the statement is constructed the way it is. The statement is only constructed in this way as a result of the constraints inherent in discourse.

The illusion of discourse, as revealed by deconstruction, is to affirm the transition from an objective genitive (the thing) to the subjective genitive (consciousness) in the discourse of the thing that philosophy claims to be: the thing itself addresses you through the channels of philosophical propositions. An exactly similar situation

exists in architectural discourse which, through the emphasis on the visual modes of perception, appears to be speaking of the physical environment when, in fact, it is speaking of itself, of its rules, its concepts and limits.

However, once this illusion is destroyed, this must not lead one to believe that one has reached a final "truth", with all the illusion of power that this belief nurtures (50). By doing away with a knowledge that is immediately identified with a power, the constant struggle between analysis and its object remains; and it is precisely this tension which is productive. This is why I spoke of analysis as a "project of crisis". This project cannot be reduced to a hermeneutics, that is, a science of interpretation; its task is to cut away the barriers it itself erects in order to proceed and surpass itself. An instrument capable of and susceptible to being modified and consumed at the hands of the analyst; a deconstructive labour which would displace the Nietzschean "stones" (51); a labour which produces meanings by removing the ones given in an immediate way.

At this stage, it is only legitimate to turn the argument in upon itself and ask whether the languages codified by critical analysis are not also spoken through a series of censures, omissions and deliberate negations. Textual criticism, semiological criticism, iconological criticism, the sociology of art, are they not all so many techniques

which only decipher by concealing the traces of murder? Are they not more or less consciously perpetrated? In other words, one could say that the language of criticism, the language which ought to be removing and breaking the "stones" that men erect in their discourses, is itself a "stone". Is one not, in fact, committing the same crime while pretending to be well aware of it? Obviously, since the project of criticism is always conducted from a historically concrete "prise de position", its findings cannot avoid being themselves "stones". Analysis is always implicated in another discourse from which it conducts its project. It seems to me, therefore, that the authentic problem of critical analysis, today, is to find a way in which one can put a critique into operation while trying, at the same time, to prevent it from becoming itself the instrument of yet another "great narrative". The problem is to design a critique capable of calling itself into question while putting simultaneously reality in a state of crisis.

In short, a truly effective analysis is always provisional. It is one which recognises its own arbitrariness, assumes it in its language and sees itself only as an uncertain edifice. Such effectiveness can only be measured by the processes that analysis gives rise to; it is these processes which are able to determine the validity of the provisional construction, itself offered

as something to be re-interpreted, analysed and, eventually, superseded. In the context of such a struggle against the contemplation of its own products, analysis must always be prepared to take the risk of a temporary unfeasability.

But to enter into practice and become operative, such a project is forced to give itself boundaries, albeit partial and temporary ones. Analytical work is obliged to betray itself consciously: it is obliged to present itself, at least on the surface, as a finished work. The final page of a book is necessary, but it should be interpreted only as a pause. In any case, a pause is the more productive to the extent that it is programmed.

3.2 Language and the extra-linguistic series

I have mentioned, above, the double responsibility of the project of critical analysis (52): that of describing the process of the theoretical production of discourses and that of the description of the structure of the modes of social production in the particular historical conjuncture in which these discourses are produced. In this part, the second aspect of this double responsibility will be dealt with.

If to study a language also means the study of its incidence on all the extra-linguistic series, one would

have to resort to a set of factors external to the "text" itself and to its structure. In this sense, it is a matter of measuring the level of this incidence on all aspects of life not immediately associated with language. The purpose of such an analysis being, as I have said, the evaluation of the nature of the relationship between intellectual labour and manual labour.

It must be clear, now, that no meaningful statement, let alone a theory or a discourse, can exist by itself. As a formation, discourse is a network of relations both internal and external; it is, in short, a practice. Just like other practices, it is constituted, modified and articulated within/in spite of/together with/against other practices.

The analysis of the incidence of discourse on the non-discursive practices involves the identification of what exactly gives this discourse its status, its legitimacy, its function and its currency. Viewed in this way, discourse shows that it has lost its apparent uniqueness and autonomy. It becomes possible to see that, as any other practices, it is the centre of a whole set of relationships; that it is constituted at the point where the power of knowledge (*le savoir*) and information (*la connaissance*) is instituted at the very structure of the social relations of production; that it is governed by all the rules that the other practices are subjected to:

exclusion, prohibition, naturalisation, division, rejection, prosecution, praise, ritualisation, realisation and, finally, institutionalisation.

There are many different ways in which one could link architectural discourses to the non-discursive formations (mainly the political and economic practices). One could present the economic and political atmosphere of a particular period by referring to the accepted texts of political and economic history, assuming in this way, an even development of the various levels of social practices. Alternatively, one could consider the themes, techniques and tools of a particular discourse as the reflection or expression of the political, economic and institutional events. The example of Hauser's sociologism is a good illustration of this way of relating politics, philosophy and art (53). There is yet another possible way of relating architectural discourses to the non-discursive practices: one could study the literature dealing with the politics and economy of a given period, tracing step by step the list of political disputes, parliamentary debates, all the institutional codes and even the tastes of the patrons. In such a case, one would be assuming that there must exist a causal network of relationships between institutional changes, economic processes and architectural discourses, and that this network determines the consciousness of the speaking subject, his world-view

and his state of mind.

What I have in mind for this particular problem, however, is an analysis of a quite different nature. In the attempt to grasp the nature of the relationships between language and the extra-linguistic series, one would not be trying to uncover cultural continuities. It is not an attempt to decipher the expressive, analogical, or symbolic pacts established between society and the physical environment in which it acts and reacts. Nor is it designed to isolate mechanisms of causality, that is, all the forces which influence and motivate the consciousness or the world-view as expressed in the built form.

Instead, it is the project of looking at the extent to which and the manner in which the political, economic and other non-discursive practices intervene in the conditions of emergence and functioning of a specific problematic at a precise moment of history. The problem is to show how architecture, as a particular domain with its own points of interest, its own field in the general space of knowledge, practiced by a number of professional bodies and taught in academic institutions, is articulated on practices which are external to it and which are, themselves, not of a discursive order. The problem is to reveal how those practices, in their respective institutional codifications, delimit the domain and the everyday recognition of the problematic of design.

A description of this sort is always deployed in the dimension of a general history, as defined earlier (54); it seeks to discover that complex domain of institutions, economic processes and social relations which bear the historicity of discourses. It tries to show that "autonomy" in discourse is not a characteristic that gives it a status of pure ideality and a complete historical independence. The autonomous dimension of architecture lies in the nature of the specific process of production by which only architectural discourses are produced and no others.

To discover that language is only one way of organising reality, one must take advantage of the deep dissociation of this reality. However, to shift the inquiry from a "text" to a "context" is not sufficient in itself. the context squeezes together artistic languages, physical realities, behavioural patterns, urban and territorial transformations as well as politico-economic processes. But this context is also broken down by technical incidents, by tactical manoeuvres which intersect with grand strategies, by subterranean ideologies which are, nevertheless, operative and by the reactions to the different techniques of domination, each of which possessing its own untranslatable language. It is not by chance that Simmel acknowledges, in his essay on fashion, that:

"The way in which it is given to us to understand the phenomena of life makes us notice a plurality of forces at every point of our existence; we feel that each of them aspires to overcome the real phenomenon, limits its infinity in relation to the others and transforms it into pure tension and desire" (55).

And he adds a little further down:

"...Precisely because the desire to go on with the given, to be equal to the others and to do exactly what the others do is the implacable enemy of the desire to proceed to new and specific forms of life, and because each of these two principles extends by itself to infinity, social life appear to be the battlefield where every inch of the territory is contested and social institutions seem like those brief reconciliations during which the antagonism of the principles, continuing to act, has assumed the outward form of reconciliation" (56).

Setting out in search for a fullness and absolute coherence in the interactions of the diverse techniques of domination which operate through the entire body of social life is what discourses in architecture try to do in their acceptance of the masks with which the past presents itself to us (the outward forms of reconciliation of which Simmel spoke); and it is the task of critical language to remove these masks and to show that power - like the institutions in which it takes bodily forms - speaks in

many different dialects. Critical analysis, thus, becomes the analysis of the confrontation of these different dialects. After disintegrating the apparent unity of reality, as expressed in discourse, analysis must, then, go elsewhere. It must make the individual fragments collide with one another and put on trial the limits that it has imposed itself. As a labour, analysis can have no end, as Freud duly recognised (57): it is infinite by nature; it is an interminable process; interminable because of its characteristics and of the objectives it is obliged to set itself. A complex and entangled field of conflicting meanings surrounds each architectural event; in this field, the history of design as a production of meanings is always one which offers no perennial value.

To those who might object to the putting of architecture back into the area of the Western division of labour and see it as a regression into a kind of primitive marxism, I would like to point out that the method proposed, here, does in no way neglect what constitutes the specific character of this practice. On the contrary, this character can only be emphasized by a reading which would identify, on the basis of verifiable parameters, the real import of planning decisions within the dynamic of the production transformations that they either set in motion, retard or attempt to prevent. This approach follows, in one way or another, the observations that Benjamin made

when, in his essay *"The author as producer"*, he gave secondary importance to that which the work says about the relations of production, while giving primary attention to the function of the same work within these relations of production. The need for such a revamping of analytical criteria is, in any case, implicit in the central theme of historical analysis: I am referring to the privileged position that the historical role of ideology occupies in criticism, since:

"The peculiarity of art is to make us see the ideology from which it is born, in which it bathes, from which it detaches itself as art and to which it alludes in its works" (59).

4. DESIGN AND IDEOLOGY

Although taken for granted, the role of ideological superstructures remains, in the writing of history, a domain relatively unexplored (60). There remains, in fact, a vast and open field for the analysis of the historical interpretations of ideology's concrete interventions in the real world. It is also a matter of great urgency that the ambiguous notion of "superstructure" not to be left to itself: it must be prevented, that is, from multiplying *ad infinitum* in the absorbing game of mirrors that it presupposes as its own specification.

The parameters proper to an analysis of the laws permitting the functioning of architectural discourses as ideological phenomena would be able to reveal the intricate routes that lead to utopia. It must be quickly added that the notion of architectural discourse as an ideological phenomenon is not intended to convey the idea that, as an instrument at the disposal of the ruling classes, it is used to maintain a situation of *status quo* in the power structure of society. This functionalist understanding of ideology is, to say the least, primitive (61).

One of the main advantages of turning to the notion of ideology, as a way of apprehending the process of production of aesthetic discourses, is that it is the only

approach which inscribes this process within the body of the global system of social processes and, thereby, bypassing the unsustainable myth of the complete autonomy of artistic languages. The other advantage of this kind of criticism is that it can shed light on the reasons why architecture has, for such a long time, refused to re-examine the formalist aesthetics of the Renaissance idealism, even when faced with the problems of the modern metropolis and the avant-gardes' hypotheses. But before that, one has, first, to specify the nature of this phenomenon of ideology.

Despite the fact that it is one of the most fundamental questions as far as theories of social formations are concerned, ideology has, all too often, been assumed to be a matter of common knowledge. The same word stood for science as well as for the opposite of science, for false consciousness as well as for that which is written, said and thought; it stood for all those things that should be put right as well as for those that one must be prepared to die for.

In its classical sense, the term was first used by Destutt de Tracy and his followers, at the end of the eighteenth century, to refer to the science of ideas, that is, the study of the origin of our ideas about the world in sense experience (62). De Tracy and his followers (appropriately known as the "ideologues") attributed to ideology the

power to demonstrate the relationship between truth and a well-ordered world. But it is Marx who brought the concept to the forefront by referring to it in a systematic attempt to demonstrate the rationality of the existing distribution of wealth and social utility of the order in which the wealthy holds positions of power. For Marx, ideology always assumes the character of an apology for institutionalised inequality (63). But since it is a static understanding of changing circumstances, it is, according to Marx, destined to the dustbin of history.

Since then, many theories relating ideology to the individual subject started emerging in sociology and psychology; and because of the definition given to it by Marx, all those theories invariably carry the meaning of ideology as a misrepresentation of reality. It has become defined as a largely unconsciously acquired structure, a pattern of thought and action engraved in the individual's mind by a certain culture. It is not a particular philosophy or faith that one can elect or reject at one's own will, but rather a state of mind which has the social function of maintaining the overall structure of society by inducing its members to accept in their consciousness the place and role assigned to them by the same structure. At the same time, it acts as an obstacle to real knowledge.

This conspirational view of ideology as functional to the

existing structure of social domination is far from being acceptable since it totally disregards its specificity as a relatively autonomous instance of social formation and not a docile instrument in the hands of the dominant social group.

While there certainly is a dimension in which the ideological substance reveals a distinct distortion of the apprehension of the real world, it is always accompanied by an allusion to this reality. One definition of ideology which takes account of both the illusion and the allusion elements was given by Althusser when he wrote:

"Every ideological representation is, in a way, a representation of reality. We understand too that this ideology gives men some kind of recognition of their world, while, at the same, leading them to a misappreciation of the same world. Ideology, considered from the point of view of reality, yields only an allusion to reality which is always accompanied by an illusion; a comprehension accompanied by a misapprehension" (64).

What this definition primarily refers to is the discrepancy between lived experience and knowledge which the post-war existentialists thought of as being necessarily identical. Ideology, Althusser says, is the expression of the lived relations of men to their existing conditions of existence, given that the expression of this relationship is never synonymous with the knowledge of it

and always includes an element of the imaginary. In the mode of theoretical production of ideology, the formulation of a problem is only the expression of the conditions allowing a solution imposed by non-theoretical instances and exigencies (i.e. moral, religious, political interests, etc...) to emerge.

Therefore, understood as the representation of the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence, ideology implies that men represent, not their real conditions of existence, but their relation to these conditions as represented to them in ideology.

The production of illusions by means of ideological representations in the course of language is, in the words of Sklovsky, similar to the Knight's moves in a game of chess. Like the movement of the Knight, the semantic structure of the discursive process swerves away from the real, sets in motion a process of alienation and organises itself in a perpetual "surreality" (65). It is this swerving that a work carries out with respect to the real which contains the ideological substance of architectural discourses, even if the forms that it takes are not always clearly articulated. This is because ideology never acts as a pure force. It not only spoils and is spoiled by praxis, but it also intertwines with other ideologies. One could say that ideologies act in group and that they

expand in a capillary fashion in the construction of reality. Within the overall structure of discourse, certain practices may have "ideological" or "hegemonic" effects which are not, however, necessarily functional to the continuation of the existing dominant order and which may not have had their origins in that order (66). One must also bear in mind that between the ideologies incorporated into a work's signifying elements and the current modes of ideological production, there always exists a margin of ambiguity which is very difficult to measure.

The ideologies invoqued in favor of, or underlying, the practice of architecture break down into many facets inviting a detailed critical operation. In opposition to a purely documentary ideology which shapes itself upon the existing order, at least three other types of ideology present themselves to the history of architecture:

a)- A progressive ideology, typical of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, which advances a theory of a worldwide embracing of the real. This is the avant-gardes' ideology which refuses any kind of mediation with the real and which, in the final instance, found itself fighting the mediation of consensus (consensus came to regard this type of approach as pure propaganda).

b)- A regressive ideology, that is, a utopia of nostalgia

expressed in its most accurate way by the different forms of anti-urban thought and by the various attempts to oppose the new commercial reality of the modern metropolis with proposals tending to recuperate the myths of an anarchistic and communal origin.

c)- Finally, an ideology which specifically calls for the reforms of the primary institutions necessary to territorial, urban and building management and which anticipates, not only veritable structural reforms, but also new modes of production and a different order to the division of labour. This ideology was best illustrated by the American progressive tradition in the work of Olmsted, Henry Wright and, generally, all the Park Movement (67).

It must be stressed that the above classification is not based on abstractions but on specific historical examples. The other point is that ideologies always exert influence in relation to each other, often overlapping each other and, in some cases, they even reverse themselves completely as they run their historical time. A typical case is that of the anti-urban ideology which, through the work of Geddes and Unwin (68) and their confluence in the conservationist and regionalist trends in the America of the twenties, takes an unforeseen course with the establishment of the modern techniques of territorial planning (69). The other example which can be mentioned is that of a single body of works - that of Le Corbusier -

which can be assessed according to number of different criteria, presenting itself at once as one chapter of the entire development of the avant-garde and as an instrument for institutional reforms.

It is clear that the validity of such a criticism is most evident in the modern and contemporary period where it may be applied to the multiple and changing meanings attributed to the expression "intellectual work" which, as a result of the transformations in the building industry, are irreducible to one single denominator.

The only way to show the ideological element in architectural discourse is to make, first, a clear distinction between two histories which, while being related to each other, are by no means identical: one has to re-assess the relationship between, on the one hand, the history of city planning and, on the other hand, the parallel history of the ideologies and programmes of the modern period. In order to do that, one has to understand why such two different histories have come to be confused in the first place as well as why one discourse is given precedence over all the others and is taken as the representative of the entire body of realisations of a given period.

The "beyond architecture" which transcends the forms themselves and which is the paradigm of modern attitudes

in design (in fact, it is the objective towards which they tend by definition) should not be confused with the reality of urban dynamics. The productivity of ideology can only be measured by its concrete results in the history of political economy as manifested within urban history. This is the only way in which one can assess the "success" or "failure" of architectural discourses in their ideological role as mediators between the bourgeois ethics and the necessities of the universe of capitalist economy.

The history of contemporary city planning and design does not coincide at all with that of the avant-gardes' hypotheses. In fact, as several recent inquiries have established (70), the tradition of city planning rests on foundations that have nothing, or very little, to do with the avant-gardes; it rests, instead, on such factors as the "medicalisation of the city" so typical of physiocratic thought; it rests on the late eighteenth century taxonomy of service spaces and on the theories of *Baumeister* ; it rests on the applications of the American Park Movement and, finally, on the English and French tradition of regionalism. The confusion between these two histories is largely due to the misunderstanding which consists in a conflation of the two historical levels which reads into the text two massive illusions: firstly, an illusion of "realisation" whereby it is supposed that

the programmes elaborated in certain discourses are integrally transposed to the domain of actual practices and techniques. Secondly, an illusion of "effectivity" whereby certain technical methods of social domination are thought of as being actually implemented and enforced upon the social body as a whole. What is necessary, therefore, is an analysis which serves to reveal, not the perfect correspondence between the two orders of discursive practice and actual practice, but the manner in which they fail to correspond and the positive significance that can attach to such discrepancies; an analysis which will show that the coherence of history does not derive from the revelation of a programme but from the logic of opposing strategies and conflicting techniques.

Even in the few cases where this non-correspondence has been registered, the way in which it has been most commonly treated left many options unexplored. Up to now, this non-correspondence has always been put on the account of the gulf existing between the intentions of a subject and the results of his actual intervention. As Hirshman remarked in a recent paper:

"...Discoveries of the symmetrically opposite kind are both possible and valuable. On the one hand, there is no doubt that human actions and social decisions tend to have consequences that are entirely unintended at the outset. On the other hand, these actions and decisions are often

taken because they are earnestly and fully expected to have certain effects that, then, wholly fail to materialise. The latter phenomenon, while being the structural obverse of the former, is likely to be one of its causes; the illusory expectations that are associated with certain social decisions at the time of adoption may keep their real future effects from view. Moreover, once these desired effects fail to happen and refuse to come into the world, the fact that they were originally counted on is likely to be, not only forgotten, but actively repressed" (71).

The empirical non-correspondence between the discursive level and that of historical effects can be analysed in terms other than those of the sociological inference of a hidden hand which orchestrates the unexpected. It can be analysed without lapsing into the interpretation of history as the realisation of some articulate programme. And just because non-realised programmes tend to be dropped from the official records, it becomes all the more important to investigate what have been the mode of their real but unprogrammed effects. This is why, as far as the ideological role of architectural discourses is concerned, it is often found more productive to start with fragments and unrealised ideas with the purpose of putting them back into their context.

If the effects of a particular programme transcend the

criterion of whether its intentions are fulfilled or not, this is largely because a programme is always something more than a formulation of wishes and intentions. Every programme either articulates or presupposes a certain knowledge of the field of reality upon which it is to intervene and/or it is calculated to bring into being. The common axiom of programmes is that an effective power is and must be a power which knows the object upon which it is exercised.

The history of architectural ideas (or architecture as ideology) has run closely to that of rational thinking in economic organisation, although the relationships between these two histories did not follow a smooth linear path; and the area in which the ideological link between architecture and economic rationality is most open to analysis lies in its dependence upon the city. The modern metropolis, the veritable cradle and paradigm of the capitalist social order, is also the pre-requisite for architecture and the ultimate scope for its striving for form (72). It is very important to understand the centrality of this theme in contemporary architectural debates. The theme of the city as the stage chosen by history to play the drama of the birth of modern man is complemented by the view that the intellectual elite has been called upon to play the role of disclosing and facilitating the forces of history - a view that has

helped to shape the concept of "avant-garde" in artistic circles and gave rise to the problematic of the relationship between economic structures, "ways of life", attitudes, cultural objects and spiritual phenomena. The problematic of the avant-garde's ideology and socio-economic rationality brings one naturally to the analysis of that tradition of European thought known as "negative thinking".

Let us see briefly what this concept of negativity entails. With the emergence of concrete philosophy (in opposition to idealism), consciousness became no longer described as a sequence of representations accompanied by the Kantian "*I think*"; consciousness came to be seen, no longer as the representation of oneself, but as the representation of the self as it is confronted by the real world. This new status of consciousness is what has come to be known as "negativity".

The question of the negative is very central to, and characteristic of, the development of European thought during the period which spans from the late nineteenth century up to the emergence of fascism. In the last twenty five years, following the conditions and contradictions of the social and political practices culminating in the upheaval of 1968, this concept regained once more all its truth and vitality. Negativity testifies to the capacity of the mind to de-pose what is in actuality, or what it

has judged to be the case, in order to posit in its place what is not (the possible, the future, the desirable, etc...). This newly acquired freedom to de-pose points to the fact that the given is seen more profoundly as a "posited".

Since no innovation in the outside world can take place without an action that introduces it, and since all action is by necessity opposition (a struggle which does violence to nature), it follows that opposition, or negation, or contradiction, is responsible for the introduction of the new into the world. Thus, negativity is understood as the very essence of freedom. The productive power of negation is said to be liberating; this is the conclusion that Kojève arrived at in his analysis of the Hegelian metaphysics:

"... But if freedom is ontologically negativity, it is because freedom can be and exist only as negation. Now, in order to negate, there must be first something to negate: an existing given... Freedom does not consist in a choice between two givens. It is the negation of the given which is oneself (as animal or incarnated tradition) and of the given which one is not (the natural and social order); this is what freedom is. The freedom which consists in the realisation and manifestation, as a dialectical or negating action, is thereby essentially a creation. For, to negate the given without ending in nothingness is to

produce something that did not yet exist; now, this is precisely what is called creation" (73).

Therefore, negativity, as the exclusive attribute of man, is what makes history possible, since nature has no history in the sense that a natural process is defined by the fact of things remaining the same at the end (in terms of structural stability) as they were at the beginning, all else being equal. Nothing really happens during a natural process. Nothing is lost in transit and nothing is created. The ability to maintain a relation with nothingness, characteristic of human action, is what introduces innovation into the world. After an authentic action, it should be possible to say: nothing will ever be the same again. The property of action is that it introduces a "nothing" between the initial state and the final state of affairs. The result can be said of having been created, produced *ex nihilo*. Consequently, as soon as he takes action, the protagonist is manifesting his will, not to being (i.e. to conserve his being), but to not being (i.e. his spleen with his being as he is, his desire to be another). In relation to negativity, "being" takes two different meanings:

a)- A natural being: in this case, to be means to remain the same or to preserve identity. In this natural portion, things are as they are and "becoming" is cyclical.

b)- A historical "being" or historicity: in this case, to be is defined by negativity. The being of the protagonist consists in not remaining the same, in the will to difference. In the historical or human portion, nothing remains as it is, no identity is preserved. Here, negativity rules or, if one prefers, difference. To act in history means to work at not being what one is. The protagonist is insofar as he acts and he acts insofar as he is always being different.

It is here that ideology comes into play, since in order to assert his freedom, the subject has to posit, in the place of the concrete reality, a virtual state or an illusion (the future, the desirable, etc...) which, as we have seen, is what characterises ideology. The avant-gardes' attitudes entailed an essential component of this "negative thought" which represented, in the first decades of our century, the most advanced moments in architectural ideology (74). This concept proved very useful as a means of classifying the different currents of the avant-garde movements: on the one hand, Dadaism, Surrealism and Expressionism and, on the other hand, Cubism, Constructivism, De Stijl, Bauhaus and all the other groups belonging to the category of the constructive avant-garde.

This schematic classification is, however, slightly

misleading in a way because if, for the first category, negativity as a philosophy directing the work is explicitly stated, it is also present in the second category, albeit in a much more complex and better hidden fashion, though this fact does not make it any less radical than that of the first category. In other words, the presence of the negative element in the second category is somehow turned upside down with the resulting conversion of a condition of extreme contradiction into one of extreme constructivity:

"This new value (negation) or even better, this new operative technique has a constant function in the transformation of the capitalist bourgeois crises into models of development. From 1920 to 1935, architecture was at the forefront in the battle of the dialectical conversion from negative to positive" (75).

The conversion from negative to positive, which gives rise to "utopias", was necessary if the avant-gardes were to maintain their position as "planners of the future". This conversion was thought to be possible through the attempts to "realise ideology", that is, through the offering of a vision of the things to come, of a future reality free from all ancient values. But this attempt to construct utopia is philosophically unsustainable for the following reason: once denaturalised by virtue of the negative definition of freedom (to be free = to be able to say no),

man is in opposition to things. Paradoxically, in these conditions, historical action is not possible, for what distinguishes action from futile agitation is that the former produces results, modifies the course of things and leaves behind a work. Now, either the work is on the side of freedom and, then, it must be stopped at the level of a project opposed to the world as it exists (i.e. a utopia), or else it is real and takes place in the world, but then it passes to the region of a thing in-itself and, as such, is no longer human. This is why the attempt to convert the negative into the positive is destined to fail even before it starts. As soon as the avant-gardes attempted to realise their utopias, they lost control over them.

Despite this philosophical impasse, the recourse to the value of the "negative" and its attempted insertion into the work itself by the classical avant-gardes was genuinely thought to be the way by which to release the potential energy lying dormant in the bourgeoisie; the energy that was kept inhibited by the moral edifice that society has erected for itself (76). The negative way of thinking became, from this point of view, a liberation from traditional values as well as the premise for action. As Tafuri wrote:

"For the avant-garde movements, the destruction of values offered a wholly new type of rationality which was capable of coming face to face with the negative in order to make

the negative itself the release valve of an unlimited potential for development" (77).

And he adds, a little further down:

"By now, ideology is given once and for all in the form of a dialectic that is founded on the negative, that makes the contradictions the propelling factor of development, that recognises the reality of the system starting from the presence of the contradiction" (78).

The negative way of thinking has become the instrument used against the stagnation of European culture, against its ancient values in the face of the increasing change in the economic structure of capitalist Europe. Ideology had to be turned into utopia, into rational models of the future in order to control it and to eliminate the risks that it might bring with it:

"In order to survive, ideology had to negate itself as such, break its own crystallised forms and throw itself entirely in the construction of the future" (79).

This is the task that the intellectual elite gave itself in the first part of the twentieth century: the redimensioning of cultural work by directing it towards the realisation of ideology. This involved the conscious choice by the avant-gardes to compromise themselves with the world of production even if that meant the destruction of the aura-induced "cult-value" of the work in the

exchange process. That choice illustrates the dilemma of the intellectual, torn between the desire to participate fully in the restructuring of society and the desire to maintain a distance from the real world in order to ensure the sacredness of intellectual work.

In the last twenty years, with the gradual isolation of cultural phenomena to the outermost margins of productivity as well as with the increasing suspicion towards the great narrative of the rational development of Western society, the ideological role of architectural discourses reverted back to a completely regressive one; that is, from being an ideology acting as the expression of the promised complete victory by man over nature, it has now taken the form of a utopia of nostalgia expressed in anti-urban models or in the attempt to oppose the new commercial reality of the metropolis with proposals tending to recuperate the myths of a harmonious and communal origin (80).

The analysis of architecture from the standpoint of its ideological function as producing a distortion of the reality of urban phenomena does raise, however, a major epistemological problem, namely, that of how to conceive of such a "distortion" without falling into the inconsistency of postulating a non-distorted model of this reality, a non-ideological standpoint from which to denounce such distortions. It is true that whenever a

5. THE STATUS OF TRUTH

The epistemological difficulty of an analysis from the point of view of ideology concerns the following question: what is it that gives foundation to one's claim that anything can be known at all about global frames of mind such as utopias or ideologies? For this assumption to make any sense, it has to refer to an epistemological position outside the global frame in question. But if all knowledge is always bound to one global frame or another, one can only speak "about" and "from within" an actual frame by referring to another which can only be "virtual". Thus, the two sides of the problem correspond to each other: "distorted" statements and statements about "distortions" partake of the same epistemological nature.

This problem is, in the final instance, that of the status of "truth" itself. The only way to approach it is to concentrate, not on the contents of discourses, but on their relations to a certain mode of interpreting the world which, in turn, is ultimately related to a social structure which constitutes its situation. It is not the specific content of ideas which matters first; it is their value as symptoms of the integrity of the mental structure from which they emerged. As Mannheim noted:

"The radius of the diffusion of a certain thought-model must be explained according to the peculiar affinity it

has to the social situation of given groups and their manner of interpreting the world" (81).

As such, the use of the term "ideology" does not have any moral or denunciatory interest. Instead, it implies an "activist" conception of knowledge, that is, a conception which discounts whatever in knowledge cannot be reduced to social action. According to this notion, the only criterion to make manifest the distortion of reality in ideologies is the principle that:

"Reality discloses itself only in actual practice" (82).

The emphasis here is on the word "actual", since any form of consciousness which exceeds the conditions of the immediately given present (either because it carries into it conditions of the past, or because it transcends it towards the future) is necessarily affected by ideology. The activist conception of knowledge entails, therefore, a radical approach to the status of truth. It shows that the opposition between truth and error, science and fable is crude and superficial. This opposition is the superstition that science must combat in order to institute itself:

"Knowledge without illusion is an illusion through and through in which everything is lost including knowledge. A theorem of it might be sketched like this: there is no myth more innocent than that of a knowledge innocent of myth. I can think of no other, so imbued are myths with knowledge and knowledge with dreams and illusions" (83).

The consequence of this is that the concept of reason must itself be reformed once and for all. It is not the case that, for the Greeks, "Logos" triumphed over "Mythos" (like good sense over delirium) with a victorious epistemological break. It is true that reason rehearses order and asserts that the real is rational; from the standpoint of this rationality, the universe rehearsed by myth is that of disorder. But it must now be realised that order is only one instance of disorder, only one particular type of it. The real is not rational, although rationality for its part is real (but only as an exception). Myth shows us that the rational is miraculous and that the odds against rationality are at least as great as those that were against the apparition of life on Earth.

Since Nietzsche, the question of truth has been completely transformed. It is no longer the question of "*What is the surest path to truth?*" which matters, but that of "*What is the hazardous career that truth has followed?*". That was Nietzsche's fundamental question (as well as Husserl's in his book, "*The crisis of European science*") (84). Science, the constraint to truth, the obligation of truth and the ritualised procedures for its production have traversed the entire body of Western society for millenia as to become the general laws for all civilisations. What is the history of this will to truth? What are its effects? These

are the questions that philosophy faces now.

The substitution of the criteria of truth and objectivity by that of the immediate absorption and adjustment into successful "actual practices" has its counterpart in a radically immanent conception of action which effectively precludes the anticipatory and representative function of projects. If certain knowledges of "man" are able to serve a technological function, it is precisely due to their ability to define a certain field of empirical truth. It is this feature of discourses that gives point to the insistence on the positive and productive character of modern apparatuses of power and to the contention that their effectivity rests on the installation of a certain "regime" of truth (85). If reason does not enter as a criterion, the assesement of the status of truth can only be made in terms of the functioning of the mechanisms of power in the elaboration of discourses. Not that this is entirely new. Nietzsche has revealed to us that all the assumed purposes, functions and causes which were claimed by historians and philosophers as being at the origin of the things they spoke of are, in actual fact, no more than words impressed more or less lightly upon events. The truth of history, says Nietzsche, is reduced to linguistic forms which hides the will to power in all its various manifestations (86).

It has been a tradition for humanism to assume that once

someone gains power, he ceases to know. Humanists assert that power makes men mad and those who govern blind; only those who manage to keep their distance from it are said to be able to discover the truth. In fact, humanism is tragically mistaken in drawing the line between truth (i.e. knowledge) and power. They are fully integrated with one another. The exercise of power provides the conditions of emergence of new objects of knowledge and the accumulation of new bodies of information. This exercise of power is not an abstract and voluntary act, but is inseparable from the modes of appropriation specific to each social formation.

The traditional question formulated by philosophy has, therefore, been completely reversed. While the old formulation was *"how the discourses of truth or, quite simply, philosophy is able to fix limits to the rights of power?"*, the problem has, now, been turned upside down: the question is to identify the rules of right which are implemented by the relations of power in the production of discourses of truth. What is meant is basically this: in societies as they exist today, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body. These relations of power cannot, in turn, be established, consolidated or implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be

no exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth. The relationship between power, right and truth is organised in a highly specific fashion; and if one was to characterise, not its mechanism, but its intensity and continuity, one would say that we are forced to produce the truth that society demands and of which it has need in order to function; we must speak the truth; we are constrained and condemned to discover the truth. Power never ceases its interrogation, its inquisition and its registration of truth; it institutionalises, professionalises and rewards its pursuit. In the last analysis, one could say that we must produce truth as we must produce wealth. We are judged, condemned, classified, determined in our undertakings and destined to a certain mode of living or dying as a function of the true discourses which are the bearers of specific effects of power.

The interest in the workings of power must, however, be specified. The problem of space, although an important aspect of the manifestation of power relations, is not the issue here. Despite the fact that architecture, because of its direct involvement in the manipulation of space,

offers a privileged instance for the understanding of the operative mechanisms of power, this theme is not the object of this study. The historical connections between space and power as they emerged in the design of educational (87), medical (88), penal (89) and economic (90) institutions are of second importance to the present discussion. Nor is it my intention to offer a general theory of power and of its relationships with the law and the state (91). As far as this study is concerned, only the nature of the connections between the theoretical production of discourses in a given period and the specific regime of truth which operates in the same period are of interest. The problem is that of showing how this regime of truth is capable of sustaining the role and place given to intellectual work in any social formation. Therefore, the issue is not that of arriving at an a-priori moral or intellectual evaluation of the features of society produced by such forms of power, but only to render possible the analysis of the process of discursive formations.

The thing to remember here is, therefore, that truth is not the reward of free spirits, nor is it the child of protracted solitude. It is not the privilege accorded to those who have succeeded in liberating themselves. Truth is but a thing of this world. It is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraints and it induces

regular effects of power. Each social formation has its own regime of truth, its own general politics of truth: that is, the type of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which it is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures according value in the acquisition of truth; finally the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. Truth is to be exclusively understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution and circulation of statements; it is not a metaphysical principle based on some essence.

The most important consequence of the alteration of the status of truth has been that of the changing role of the intellectual. For a long period now, the intellectual spoke and has always been acknowledged the right of speaking in the capacity of master of truth and justice. He was heard, or purported to make himself heard, as the spokesman of the universal. To be an intellectual meant something like being the consciousness/conscience of us all; it meant being the guardian of all that we represent in essence.

Some years have now passed since the intellectual was called upon to play this role again. A new mode of connection between theory and practice came to be established. In most cases, the intellectuals have now got

used to working, not in the modality of the "universal", the "exemplary" or the "true and just for all", but within specific sectors at the precise points where their own conditions of life and work situate them (housing, hospital, laboratory, university, family, etc...). This has undoubtedly given them a more immediate and concrete awareness of struggles at the local levels; and they have met there with problems that are specific, non-universal and often different from those of other people. This is what one might call the "specific" intellectual as opposed to the universal and all-embracing intellectual.

This new configuration of intellectual work has a further political significance. It made it possible, if not to integrate, at least to re-articulate categories which were previously kept separate. The intellectual *par excellence* used to be the writer: as a universal consciousness, a free subject, he was always counterposed to those who were merely competent instances - the technicians, the teachers, the doctors, the magistrates, etc... But as soon as arose the time when each individual's specific activity began to be used as the basis for social action, then the threshold of writing disappeared. It has become possible to develop lateral connections across different forms of knowledge. This process explains why, even when the writer tends to disappear as the figurehead, the university and the academic emerge, if not as the principal elements, at

least as exchangers and privileged points of intersection. What has been called the "crisis of the universities" should not be interpreted as a loss of power or as the incapacity to be influencing, but on the contrary, as a multiplication and re-inforcement of their power-effects as centres in a polymorphous ensemble of intellectuals who virtually all pass through and relate to the academic system.

Therefore, it seems to me that the most important development in the intellectual's new position is that he has exchanged his characteristic of bearer of universal values for that of a person occupying a place, the specificity of which is linked to the general structure and functioning of an apparatus of truth in a given social formation. In other words, the contemporary intellectual has a three-fold specificity: that of his class-position; that of his conditions of work and life linked to his position as intellectual worker; and finally, that of the politics of truth as it exists today in Western society. It is this last factor which gives his position the opportunity to take on a general significance. It is also with this factor that his local and specific struggle can have effects and implications which go beyond the purely sectorial or professional interests. The possibility of operating at the general level of that regime of truth, so essential to the functioning of society, is what defines

the intellectual as "producer" (92).

There is a battle for truth or, rather, a battle around truth (again, truth refers here to the set of rules according to which the "true" is separated from the "false" and specific effects of power are attached to the true). It must be understood that it is not a matter of a battle on behalf of the truth, but that of a battle about the status of truth and the political, economic and social role it assumes. This battle is about maintaining or changing the set of rules instrumental in the elaboration of discourses. Once one does away with the false opposition of science and false consciousness and replaces it with a problematic in terms of truth and power, the question of the gradual professionalisation of the intellectual and the division of labour in terms of intellectual work and manual work takes on an entirely new meaning.

Now, the specific intellectual encounters certain problems and faces certain dangers. There is, first, the danger of remaining at the level of conjunctural struggles, pressing in this case demands restricted to particular sectors. Then, there is the risk of letting himself be manipulated by the political parties or groups which control these local struggles. But above all, there is the risk of being unable to develop these struggles for want of a global strategy.

The essential responsibility of the intellectual, today, is not to stand as society's consciousness and the guardian of truth; nor is it to ensure that his scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology (i.e. one that corresponds to the accepted moral and ethical standards of his time). the responsibility which faces him is that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth, a new definition of the rules by which the true is separated from the false. To sum up, the problem is not that of changing people's consciousness or that which is in their head, but the political, economic and institutional regime of production of truth. It is not that of error, illusion, alienated consciousness or distorted mentalities; the problem is truth itself.

The redefinition of the objectives and attributes of intellectual work is a symptom which suggests a general redistribution of social roles. The projects, tactics and goals to be adopted are now a matter for those who do the fighting. What the intellectual can do is to provide instruments of analysis which, at the present time, is the essential task of historical research. What is effectively needed is a ramified and penetrative perception of the present situation; a perception which would make it possible to locate lines of weakness and strong points. In other words, a topological survey of the battlefield: this is the new task of the intellectual. But as for saying

"here is what we must do", certainly not.

Consequently, the role of theory seems to be just this: not to formulate a global and systematic model which holds everything in place, but to analyse the specificity of the mechanisms by which true discourses are produced and accepted as such, to locate the connections and extensions and to build little by little a strategic knowledge. This notion of theory as a toolkit means two things:

a)- that the theory to be constructed is not a system but an instrument, a logic of the specificity of power relations and of the struggle around them.

b)- that the investigation can only be carried out step by step on the basis of a reflection on given situations (a reflection which, by necessity, must be historical).

It is certainly not an easy task to integrate this type of analysis which emphasizes the theoretical contribution of critical language and a type of architectural practice which faces the pressing problems of urban decay. The abandonment by architecture of any pretention of ever playing a predominant part in the organisation of the future does not mean that it should turn, now, to assuming a new role of persuasion, trying to convince the public through symbolic metaphors that the contradictions, imbalances and chaos typical of contemporary urban environments contain within themselves unlimited

possibilities and an unexplored richness, as the eclectic experiments of the last decade were trying to do.

Nor is it a matter of laying aside the questions of language and experiment in order to operate solely in the field of the administration of the territory and the building trade. Rather, it is a question of architects understanding that this reality of social processes is not an impurity to be eliminated or a compromise to be avoided at all costs, but that it is the basic material of the designer's work. No one is claiming that contemporary architectural practice is simply a technique submerged in the administrative organisation; in fact, it is from its proposals for change and its inventions that the administration draws the elements essential to its own vitality.

Therefore, it is not just a matter of transferring those standards of quality and meaning that are proper to architectural language into the world of production (a task characteristic of the ideology of work). Instead, it is one of being aware that language lives in the world of production, in any case. This relationship with the world of production constitutes an indispensable layer of solidity for architecture. It is only by the courageous acceptance of its limits that architectural language can claim the autonomous character of its intervention. The uttermost consistency in the pursuit of the laws of

autonomous activity is that which brings it close to the state of something that can be produced and made consciously and not one that renders it into a taboo or a fetish. As Mallarme once stated:

"Works of literature are something not inspired but made out of words" (93).

(2) R. D. Bachard, "La formation de l'espèce humaine", Editions Vrin (Paris, 1951). In Bachard's reference can be made to G. G. Granger, "Fœtus, langage, langage, langage", Editions Vrin (Paris, 1951) and in particular to G. G. Granger's study, "Le langage et l'espèce humaine", published by the author in "Revue d'histoire de la philosophie des sciences", Editions Vrin (Paris, 1951).

(3) G. G. Granger, "Le langage et l'espèce humaine", Editions Vrin (Paris, 1951) and by the same author, "Revue d'histoire de la philosophie des sciences", 1951, 1952.

(4) Ibid. op. cit.

(5) R. D. Bachard, "La formation de l'espèce humaine", Editions Vrin (Paris, 1951).

(6) Ibid. op. cit.

NOTES

1. THE HISTORICAL SLEEP

- (1) K. Marx, extract from a letter to H. Ruge (September, 1843), published in "*Correspondances*", Editions 10/18 (Paris, 1971), p23.
- (2) G. Bachelard, "*La formation de l'esprit scientifique*", Editions Vrin (Paris, 1938). On Bachelard, reference can be made to G.G. Granger, "*Pensee, logique, language. Hommage a Gaston Bachelard*", P.U.F. (Paris, 1957) and in particular to G. Canguilhem's study, "*Sur une epistemologie concordataire*", reedited by the author in "*Etudes d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences*", Editions Vrin (Paris, 1968).
- (3) G. Canguilhem, "*Le normal et le pathologique*", P.U.F. 3rd edition (Paris, 1966) and by the same author, "*Etudes d'histoire et de philosophie des sciences*", op. cit.
- (4) Ibid op. cit.
- (5) M. Serres has studies this phenomenon in "*L'interference*", Editions Minuit (Paris, 1972).
- (6) Ibid op. cit.

- (7) L. Althusser, *"For Marx"*, New Left Books (London, 1977), p168.
- (8) As, for instance, Barthes' literary criticism which takes as the prime object of analysis the structure and language of the particular work under study. See R. Barthes, *"Le degre zero de l'écriture, suivi des nouveaux essais critiques"*, Editions Seuil (Paris, 1972) and also by the same author, *"Critique et verite"*, Editions Seuil (Paris, 1966).
- (9) The expression is recurrent in Foucault's writings.
- (10) M. Tafuri, *"Architecture and utopia. Design and capitalist development"*, M.I.T. Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), p3.
- (11) This point has already been discussed in relation to the empiricist epistemology, pp75-96.
- (12) In fact, for a very long time and up to the most recent years, the multiple expressions of the desire to find a "common language", an organicity in life, all converge on Hegel. This was confirmed by Sollers who, at the colloquy on George Bataille organised by *Tel Quel* at Cerisy-la-Salle in 1972, could still declare that the shift in emphasis, of which I have been speaking, was to be understood as the effects of the explosion of the Hegelian system. See P. Sollers,

"Bataille", Editions 10/18 (Paris, 1973), p36. Refer also to Foucault's inaugural address at the College de France in 1970 when he declared that: "...whether through logic or epistemology, whether through Marx or Nietzsche, our entire epoch struggles to disengage itself from Hegel", and P. Klossowski who explained the transition from Hegel to Nietzsche in "*Nietzsche et le cercle vicieux*", Editions Mercure de France (Paris, 1969), p32. For a discussion of Hegel's influence on a succession of major art historians, see E.H. Gombrich, "*In search of culture history*", Oxford University Press (Oxford, 1969). Gombrich maintains that this influence has been largely pernicious.

(13) This search for a higher order of organisation that would transcend the apparent chaos of everyday life has never really ceased. Numerous attempts have been made since Hegel, the most recent one being the much publicised study of I. Priogrine & I. Stengers, "*Order out of chaos: man's new dialogue with nature*", Bantam Books (New York, 1984).

(14) See "*Hegel's aesthetics*", a text put together by Hegel's contemporary, H.G. Hotho, from Hegel's own notes for the lectures he gave in Berlin in the 1820's and from the students' notes on those lectures. Reimpression by F. Bassenge (Frankfurt Am Main, 1965), pp155-157.

- (15) G.W.F. Hegel, *"Vorlesungen uber die Aesthetik"*, published in *"On art, religion and philosophy"*, translated by J. Sibree, Harper Books (New York, 1970), pp22-127. On the category of the imitation of nature in classical art, see W. Tatarkiewicz, *"History of aesthetics"*, Editions Mouton (The Hague, 1970) and also A. Blunt, *"Artistic theory in Italy"*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 1956).
- (16) G.W.F. Hegel, *"Logic"* Part I of *"The Encyclopedia of the philosophical sciences"*, translated by W. Wallace & A.V. Miller, Oxford University Press (Oxford, 1971), para. 214.
- (17) J.J. Winckelmann, *"History of art in Antiquity"*, first published in 1764, reimpression by Oxford University Press (Oxford, 1963), p37.
- (18) G.W.F. Hegel, *"The philosophy of history"*, translated by J. Sibree, Harper Books (New York, 1956).
- (19) Ibid op. cit., Part II and III.
- (20) H. Wofflin, *"Renaissance and Baroque"*, translated by K. Simon, Cornell University Press (Ithaca, N.Y., 1966), p66.
- (21) G.W.F. Hegel, *"Introduction to the Berlin aesthetics lectures"*, translated by T.M. Knox, Oxford

University Press (Oxford, 1979), p57.

2. THE LEGACY OF HEGEL

(22) cf. "*Hegel's aesthetics*", op. cit. p97.

(23) N. Pevsner, "*An outline of European architecture*", Penguin Books (1974), p14.

(24) L. Althusser & E. Balibar, "*Lire le Capital*", FM/Petite Collection Maspero (Paris, 1973), p168.

(25) P. Frankl, "*Gothic architecture*", Penguin Books (1962), pxvi.

(26) E. Panofsky, "*Gothic architecture and scholasticism*", Wimmer lecture (1948), The Archabbey Press (Latrobe, Penn., 1951), pp21-22.

(27) E. Panofsky, "*Studies on iconology*", Oxford University Press (Oxford, 1939), p7.

2. AN ALTERNATIVE METHOD OF ANALYSIS

(28) This aspect was analysed by A. Pred in "*Social reproduction and the time-geography of everyday life*", published in *Geografisker Annaler* N.63 Series B (1981), pp5-22. See also A. Pred & R. Pred, "*The New Naturalism. A critique of Order and Chaos*", published in *Environment and Planning D: Space and Society* Vol.3

(1985), pp461-476.

(29) These phrases were borrowed from D. Selbourne's *"On the methods of History Workshop"*, published in *History Workshop* N.9, pp150-161.

(30) "Functionalism" is a term that can be applied to a number of first-order mistakes that characterise too much of current social science. These include: a) the attributing of needs to social systems; b) the assumption that social systems are functionally ordered and cohesive; c) the imputing of a teleology to social systems; d) the characterisation of effects as causes; e) the setting up of empirically unverifiable propositions via tautological statements.

(31) Good critiques of functionalist theory can be found in A. Giddens, *"Central problems in social theory"*, Macmillan (London, 1979) and by the same author, *"A contemporary critique of historical materialism"*, Macmillan (London, 1981). See also J. Urry, *"The anatomies of capitalist societies. The economy, civil society and state"*, Macmillan (London, 1981) and N.J. Thrift, *"On the determination of social action in space and time"*, published in *Environment and Planning D: Space and Society* Vol.1 (1983), pp23-57.

(32) A. Giddens, *"Central problems in social theory"*, op. cit. p54.

- (33) This is what D. Gregory tried to do in *"Solid geometry: notes on the recovery of spatial structure"*, published in *"A search for common ground"*, Edited by P. Goulds & G. Olsson, Pion Publications (London 1982), pp187-219.
- (34) P. Bourdieu, *"Outline of a theory of practice"*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1977), p9.
- (35) G. Therborn, *"The ideology of power and the power of ideology"*, New Left Books (London, 1980), p23.
- (36) On that aspect, see P. Ricoeur, *"Hermeneutics and the social sciences. Essays on language, action and interpretation"*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1981).
- (37) L. Althusser & E. Balibar, *"Lire le Capital"*, op. cit. p24.
- (38) M. Foucault, *"The archaeology of knowledge"*, Tavistock Publications (London, 1972).
- (39) L. Althusser & E. Balibar, *"Lire le Capital"*, op. cit. p26.
- (40) Ibid op. cit., pp27-28.
- (41) S. Freud, *"Moïse et le monothéisme"*, N.F.R. Collection Idées (Paris, 1968), p59. J.M. Rey has

related this work of decoding to what Nietzsche discovered in the formation of languages: "Philosophical language has not been able to be presented as autonomous or univocal except by way of a far larger omission, which is to say, a decisive dismissal of its production, its metaphorical tissue, its loans, its debts and the complex of its trauma. The effects of this massive omission are those that Nietzsche re-inscribes in his text through the practice of the double inscription, a re-doubling, re-effusion, a productive translation. This work is entirely analogous to Freud's decoding operation", J.M. Rey, "Il nomma della scrittura", published in *Il verri* N.39-40 (1972), P218.

(42) On that point, see especially F. Nietzsche, "The gay science", translated by R.J. Hollingdale, Vintage Books (New York, 1974). See also R.J. Hollingdale, "A Nietzsche reader", Penguin Books (1984), pp215-231.

(43) See M. Foucault, "Nietzsche", published in "Les cahiers du Royaumont", Editions Minuit (Paris, 1967), p189.

(44) N.J. Thrift, "Limits to knowledge in social theory: towards a theory of human practice" (1979), available as a mimeograph from the department of human geography, Australian National University, Canberra.

- (45) This schema was very similar to that proposed by J. Habermas in "*A reply to my critics*", published in "*Habermas. Critical debates*", Edited by J.B. Thomson & D. Held, Macmillan (London, 1982), p264.
- (46) See, for instance, Le Comte de Buffon, "*Discours sur la maniere de traiter l'histoire naturelle*", published in "*Oeuvres completes*", L'Imprimerie Royale (Paris, 1774), p31 and also J.F. Blondel "*Cours d'architecture*" Vol.I, Imprimerie Chez Desaint (Paris, 1771).
- (47) Go back to pp145-146.
- (48) J. Derrida, "*La voix et le phenomene*", P.U.F. (Paris, 1967) and also by the same author, "*L'ecriture et la difference*", Editions Seuil (Paris, 1967).
- (49) On some of the studies on deconstruction, see J. Culler, "*On deconstruction*", Cornell University Press (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982) and M. Ryan, "*Marxism and deconstruction*", The John Hopkins University Press (Baltimore, M.D., 1984).
- (50) Go back to the discussion on the dangers facing critical language in p11.
- (51) Refer to quote in p54.
- (52) Go to p150.

- (53) A. Hauser, *"The social history of art"*, translated by S. Godman, Vintage Books (New York, 1951).
- (54) Go back to p137.
- (55) G. Simmel, *"Zur Psychologie der Mode. Soziologische studie"*, first published in *Die Zeit* (1895), republished in *Arte e civiltà* N.13 (1975) by D. Formaggio & L. Perucchi, p.19.
- (56) Ibid op. cit., pp19-20.
- (57) S. Freud, *"Die endliche und die unendliche analyse"*, published in *"Gesammelte werke XVI"*, translated and republished as *"Analyse terminée et analyse interminable"* in *Revue française de psychanalyse* N.10-11 (1938-1939), pp3-38. See also the commentary of it made by F. Rella in the introduction of *"La critica freudiana"*, Editions bompiani (Milano, 1977), from p45.
- (58) W. Benjamin, *"The author as producer"*, published in *"Understanding Brecht"*, New Left Books (London, 1973), pp85-103.
- (59) L. Althusser, *"Lenin and philosophy"*, N.L.B. Editions (London, 1971), p54.

4. DESIGN AND IDEOLOGY

(60) This is true despite the number of recent studies in social theory, human geography, archaeology and the theory of history. Some of these are D. Lacapra, *"Rethinking intellectual history: texts, contexts, language"*, Cornell University Press (Ithaca, N.Y., 1983); P. Saunders, *"Social theory and the urban question"*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1981); J.G. Thomson, *"Studies on the theories of ideology"*, Polity Press, (Cambridge, 1984); G. Therborn, *"The ideology of power and the power of ideology"*, New Left Books (London, 1980); S.J. Tambiah, *"Culture, thought and social action. An anthropological perspective"*, Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass., 1985); D. Gregory, *"Ideology, science and human geography"*, Hutchinson (London, 1978); K. Kristiansen, *"Ideology and material culture: an archaeological perspective"*, published in *"Marxist perspective in archaeology"*, Edited by M. Spriggs, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1984), pp72-100; D.J. Meltzer, *"Ideology and material culture"*, published in *"Modern material culture, the archaeology of us"*, Edited by R. Goulds & M. Schiffer, Academy Press (New York, 1981), pp113-125; and finally, M. Miller & C. Tilley, *"Ideology, power and prehistory"*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1984).

(61) On the discussion on the functionalist conception

of ideology, refer to the preliminary chapter of this study, pp2-15.

(62) Destutt de Tracy, "*Elements d'ideologie*" Vol.I & II (Paris, 1799) and Condillac, "*Essai sur l'origine des connaissances humaines*", published in "*Oeuvres*" (Paris, 1798). I do not know of any re-impression of these studies, the first editions of which are kept in the Biliotheque Nationale in Paris. See also D.J. Manning, "*The form of ideology*", George Allen & Unwin publications (London, 1980).

(63) K. Marx & F. Engels, "*The German ideology*", Lawrence & Wishart Publications (London, 1965).

(64) L. Althusser, "*Essays on ideology*", Verso Publications (London, 1971), p105.

(65) V. Sklovsky, "*Ulla, Ulla Marziani*", in "*Chod konja*", (Moscow-Berlin, 1926), pp36-58. See also M. Tafuri, A. Asor Rosa & al., "*Socialismo, citta, architettura*", Edizioni Officina (Roma, 1972).

(66) On that particular point, see J. Urry, "*The anatomies of capitalist societies. The economy, civil society and the state*", op. cit.

(67) See J. Fabos, G.T. Milde & V.M. Weinmayer, "*Frederick Law Olmsted*", University of Massachussets Press (Boston, 1968); L.W. Roper, "*Biography of F.L.*

Olmsted", The John Hopkins University Press (Baltimore, M.D., 1973); D. Fein, "*F.L. Olmsted and the American environmental tradition*", Braziller Books (New York, 1972); H. Wright, "*The interrelation of housing and transit*", published in *American city* N.10 (1914), pp12-28. On the birth of the Park Movement, see L. Marx, "*The machine in the garden; technology and the pastoral ideal in America*", Galaxy Books (New York, 1967) and R. Nash, "*The American cult of the primitive*", published in *American quarterly* N.18 (1966), pp43-64.

- (68) See P. Geddes, "*Cities in evolution*", Editions Benn (London, 1968); K. Paddy, "*A most unsettling person; an introduction to the ideas and life of Patrick Geddes*", Editions Gollancz (London, 1975); P. Boardman, "*Worlds of Patrick Geddes, biologist, town-planner, re-educator, peace-warrior*", Routledge and Kegan Paul (London, 1978); P. Mairet, "*Pioneer of sociology; the life and letters of Patrick Geddes*", Lund Humphries (London, 1957); M. Stalley, "*Patrick Geddes: spokesman for man and the environment*", Rutgers University Press (New Brunswick, 1972). On Unwin, see R. Unwin, "*Town planning in practice: an introduction to the art of designing cities and suburbs*", Editions Unwin (London, 1909) and W.L. Creese, "*The legacy of Raymond Unwin: a human pattern for planning*", M.I.T. Press (Cambridge,

Mass., 1967).

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CONCLUSION IN THE FORM OF A PROBLEM

There can be no finality in theory. No analysis can ever be brought to a close without betraying itself; where and when a particular inquiry must end is determined to a very large extent, not by the feeling that one has reached a final viewpoint from which one can affirm: *"This is how it should be"*, but by all the conjunctural factors which condition the work of the analyst. It is because of the particular limitations imposed by the conditions of its production that a text or a book must be brought to its conclusion. But this conclusion is to be interpreted only as a momentary end, a pause consciously and carefully determined. As such, it is the appropriate place from where to look back at the route travelled and discuss what may follow from it.

First of all, the main motivation of this study was the possibility of opening up the channels of new areas of inquiry, new terms and new problematics. This incessant need to look for new channels should not, however, be interpreted as some fashionable trend which would wither away in the course of time as soon as it starts losing its power of captivating the imagination of those who use it; nor is it some obsessive mania which preys on particular individuals or groups. Instead, it is at the origin of all the obligations that a person has to endure during the

course of his life. It is this necessity which characterises the consciousness of the "historical" man whose deepest emotion is the insuperable mistrust of the course of things and the readiness to recognise at all times that everything can go wrong. This is what Benjamin was referring to when he spoke of the "destructive character" as reliability itself, that is, the only constant characteristic of man:

"The destructive character sees nothing permanent. But for this very reason, he sees ways everywhere. Where others encounter walls or mountains, there too he sees a way... Because he sees a way everywhere, he always positions himself at the crossroads. No moment can know what the next will bring. What exists, he reduces to rubbles, not for the sake of the rubbles, but for that of the way leading through" (1).

The alternative method of analysis that I tried to outline is but the expression of this necessity, directed at architectural discourses. The aim was to show that, through the analysis of the processes that lead from the production of knowledge in architecture to its reception as such by the general public, it was possible to unearth the buried connections between architecture and the general epistemological structure of knowledge which makes the enunciation of certain problems possible while prohibiting that of others.

Because this analysis was based on the conviction that the specific contents in architectural discourses are primarily the reflection of the manner in which theoretical production operates in architecture, the inquiry had to be conducted on two fronts simultaneously.

On the one hand, an analysis of the contents of discourses, with a view of demonstrating that the purpose and objectives that architecture gives itself are not as "natural" or obvious as they are made to appear, but that they are in fact the products of a previous construction; a construction which took place at the level of the epistemological structure operating through the entire body of society. For architecture to be able to speak of man's needs, for instance, it was necessary that it assumed a perspective which ignores the diversity and differences between real individuals or groups in order to let emerge an ideal model of what man is or should be, in short, man as an essence. To this abstract category of "man" (i.e. man = the essence of man), idealised needs and desires are made to correspond, resulting in the formulation of problems and solutions which owe their justification, not to any historically verifiable data, but only to the dominant ideological framework regulating the production of knowledge in the West: that of rationality as the guiding principle of all social organisation and production.

On the other hand, this study had to concentrate on the hidden mechanisms of discursive production by which the above substitution of the abstract notion of man to real individuals was able to take place. It is those mechanisms which are responsible for the persistence of the nostalgic themes of a harmonious environment built for harmonious communities made of rational men whose problems are solved through the peaceful means of reason and dialogue.

By far the most important of these mechanisms is that which binds together distinct practices under one single generic name. At the discursive level, the magical alliance between criticism and design and their denomination under the all-encompassing term of "architecture" has meant that it has been impossible to operate a critique from outside the ideological structure of architectural discourses. It was, therefore, only natural that the first task facing this analysis was to try and re-establish a distance between critical language and design language; both languages require a specialisation which leads to their incommunicability. The object of criticism is primarily to unveil the mechanisms of nostalgia; its purpose is to show that the synthetic appearance given to architecture by discourse serves the sole purpose of hiding the complex and multifaceted nature of the processes involved in the production of the environment under the conditions of contemporary urban

reality. The task of critical analysis is to show that the reality of the contemporary metropolis is not the expression of a single "logos" or the physical manifestation of a communal will to form; it is, instead, the product of a series of bitter struggles between conflicting interests and motivations. Only by bringing these contradictions and struggles into light can criticism account for the complex phenomenological nature of the metropolis. These contradictions must not longer be considered as the stigma of history which must be eliminated through analysis, in order to let a final coherence emerge; they are that which the critical analyst must emphasize and bring to the open.

Once such a strategy is initiated, it becomes possible to deconstruct the peculiar globality of the terms used in architecture (such as "environment", "city", "human needs", etc...). While they leave very little outside their all-embracing generality, it is precisely that generality which excludes many fundamental objects and relations. The demystification of this generality is certainly the most potential step of analysis. What is more, the deconstruction and disarticulation of these global terms does not lead, as one might think, to the deprivation of the field, but to the generation of new perspectives; perspectives which correspond to the individual fragments resulting from the explosion of these

global terms. Only by establishing the apparent unity of discourse as the prime object of critical examination could such a deconstruction suggest, not a void to be filled, but a clarity to be exploited. After all, by trying to dissolve the everythingness of terms such as "environment" or "city", those "everythingness" to which they refer do not disappear. It is only those whose definition is dependent upon an undefinable and ubiquitous generality which disappear since this generality is no longer the unquestioned term of reference.

While there is no such a thing as "architecture", there are distinct architectural practices which are reducible to neither their physical products nor their ideological self-image. These practices consist of complex objects and relations whose physical existence as well as theoretical conception are socially conditioned. Therefore, as a social practice, the production of knowledge in architecture cannot but be located within a specific space-time problematic which, by definition, prohibits the use of all abstractions or universalising principles as the justification for its products. The definition, classification, distribution and transformation of discourses are possible only because they are the result of a process of intellectual production socially conditioned.

This conception of intellectual work, which insists on the

fundamental reciprocity between theoretical constructs and empirical materials, accentuates the importance of the "local" and the "contingent" in the enunciation of discourses. A re-arrangement of "theory" which entails a radical scepticism about the traditional project of totalisations and puts in its place the recovery of more particular truths dependent as much on general strategies as on local negotiations of power. It is the task of criticism to build little by little a strategic knowledge out of a multitude of analyses of these local negotiations of power in which universal essences and values have no place.

The critical method outlined here can only be a tentative one, since it is in its actual applications on empirical situations that its worthiness can be assessed, according to the fruitfulness of the results that it may or may not produce. As such, it must not be taken as a blueprint, a finished statement or a definite model. At best, it represents a certain attitude or perspective and carries with it the explicit requirement of self-criticism, availability to modification and transformation.

From it, one has to move to its application and testing on specific studies which take into account both the ideas formulated in discourse and their real effects on the local situations from which they emerge and to which they apply. It is through this constant moving back and forth

from texts to contexts that will account for the historicity of artistic language by pointing to the limits of its autonomy. The critical awareness of those limits is what puts architecture before its responsibilities; that is, warning it against the spreading of rhetorical messages or against self-referential circularity.

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